

# THE GRAPEVINE

ORGANIZED WORKING WOMEN



OTTAWA

Vol. 1 No. 1  
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## Our first issue



Welcome to the Grapevine, the newsletter for Ottawa's women workers.

Published by the Ottawa branch of Organized Working Women, the Grapevine will keep you up to date on what's happening of interest to union women in the area. As well as short news articles, you'll find announcements of upcoming events and lots of thought-provoking articles on issues affecting today's working women. With your help and interest, we hope to come out monthly.

Read the Grapevine as you drink your morning coffee or sip your tea, and enjoy! Drop us a line to let us know what *you think*.

## Privatization hurts women most

by Deborah Bourque  
Canadian Union of Postal Workers

Privatization boosters may talk about economic growth, competitiveness and productivity, but this economic trend spells nothing but disaster for women workers.

They will reap none of the so-called benefits from this move to transfer the provision of public services to the private sector.

Workers in the United States and England know from painful experience that privatization means massive job loss, higher prices, lower wages and poorer working conditions and services. That's what women who work in the service sector -- 83 per cent of all employed women in Canada -- face if the privatizers have their way.

Privatization also hurts the consumers of service. It tends to shift the financial burden from the tax system to the users and to those who can least afford the increased fees -- women, the poor, the elderly and the disabled.

While businesses and corporations will profit from privatization, it's clear that they'll do it on the backs of women, workers and the disadvantaged.

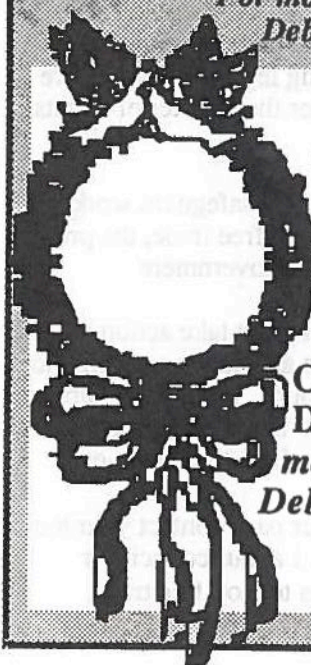
## Join OWW today!

OWW is a trade union women's organization which provides strike support, skills building, education and organizing help to union women. Our energies are directed at issues of importance to working women.

For example, in October OWW-Ottawa and Women's Skills Development of B.C. sponsored a conference on "Taking control: tech change and women's work." Workshops were attended by women from various unions and dealt with issues such as training, real versus token participation, stress and changing skill requirements and pay equity.

During the recent postal strike, OWW members were out on the picket lines with their sisters and brothers from CUPW and helped distribute literature on the strike to unions in Ottawa. If you are a woman and belong to a union you can be a member of OWW. Women who are not union members can be friends of OWW, as can supportive men. Send your cheque for \$20 to OWW-Ottawa, c/o ODLC, 288 Dalhousie St.

For more information call  
Deborah at 236-7238.



## Christmas pot luck!

Bring a friend to  
OWW-Ottawa's  
Christmas pot luck,  
December 13. For  
more details, call  
Deborah, 236-7238.

# CUPW: Fighting the business agenda

by Carole Coplea  
Ottawa Newspaper Guild

The postal strike may be over because of the government's iron-fisted legislation, but the issues and the struggle remain. For the union: job security, job protection and increased postal services. For management: privatization, concessions and the cheap labour strategy of the Mulroney government.

If Canada Post gets its way, 50 post offices will be contracted out to retail businesses by March 1988. These businesses pay their mostly women workers next to the minimum wage. Their workers have no union, no security, no benefits above the minimum and little protection against sexual harassment and discrimination.

Franchising post offices will mean the loss of 8,700 postal worker jobs in five years.

## Anti-worker agenda

Privatizing the post office is just the tip of the iceberg in the Mulroney government's low wage strategy. It ties in with free trade and deregulation as the third prong of the pitch fork employers will use to toss workers rights out the window.

What does this pro-business agenda mean to women? It means fewer union jobs with union wages, fewer health and safety laws and social and welfare services. It means good-bye to quality, public day care, hello to the profit makers.

In its privatization campaign, the government picked CUPW as its first victim, passing legislation so severe the union has challenged it under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The lessons for labour are clear. To safeguard workers' rights and incomes we must defeat free trade, the pro-business agenda and the Mulroney government.

How can we do this? Each of us must take action by becoming involved in our union and supporting alliances between unions, community groups, women's groups and other interest groups. CUPW is mapping out a broad fight-back campaign that will include these elements.

To find out how you can do your part, contact your local union or the Ottawa and District Labour Council for information about labour's plans to stop free trade, deregulation and privatization. Act now!

## GRAPEVINE WANTS

# YOU

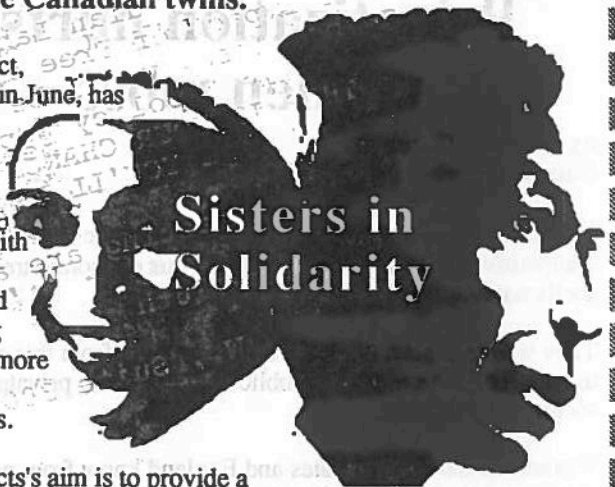


How can you find out what's going on with women in other local unions?

Through the *Grapevine*! How do we find out what's going on with women in your local? Through the short articles you submit to the *Grapevine*, c/o Ottawa and District Labour Council, 288 Dalhousie Street. We want your news and views!

Sisters in Solidarity, on OWW project matching Ethiopian women with Canadian women, is looking for more Canadian twins.

The project, launched in June, has already matched up four Ethiopian women with Canadian sisters and is looking for three more Canadian volunteers.



"The project's aim is to provide a Canadian friend to an Ethiopian woman and an Ethiopian friend to a Canadian woman," says Sandi Howell, one of the program co-ordinators.

Canadian sisters can help their Ethiopian friends in the areas of workers' and women's rights, and looking for job and language training.

"Ultimately, we want to promote understanding among women of different cultures and to build solidarity for our struggle to make the world a better place for women," says Howell.

For more information about Sisters in Solidarity, call:  
Sandi Howell (h) 737-0414 (w) 237-1590  
Debra Pilon (h) 230-2394  
Sylvia Smith (h) 236-9533