

HI!

Here it is three months into 1987 already and time to review OSSOMM activities for 1986 and look ahead to 1987. There is so much good news that it is hard to know where to start.

First, a short explanation of why it's been so long since the last newsletter. There are no apologies because the reasons are ones we can all relate to. They also underline both why OSSOMM started and why spouses haven't had a national organization until now. The reasons are transfers, babies, retirements, work, courses and education. Of the original five who conceived the idea of OSSOMM there have been 2 retirements, two transfers, two have started full time school, 3 moves and one has left the service. As usual, you can see that there have been several overlapping events. Another early supporter has had two babies. It's obvious that there have been many changes and many challenges to meet. The challenges are familiar to all who have been associated with the military for any length of time. We've all learned to adjust to them as must our organization in order to survive. Almost everything has changed except our determination to see this group serve the needs of Canadian military families wherever they may be. So, for now, look forward to semi-annual newsletters.

From and for KINGSTON: WIFE BATTERING

Wife battering is an intolerable and destructive behaviour that is not limited to physical abuse but also includes sexual assault (any form of forced sexual activity), emotional/psychological abuse (name-calling, humiliation, controlling the woman's life, lack of affection and love, etc.) and the destruction of pets and property.

Until the late 19th century, laws explicitly stated that domestic chastisement was a husband's right and often prescribed the methods to be used. Today, wife battering is illegal and can be prosecuted under the sections of the criminal code dealing with the various forms of assault, sexual assault and threat of assault. Although the right of a man to beat his wife has been officially discarded, many men who batter believe that they are "knocking her around to keep her in line".

Wife assault is both a women's issue and a community issue. Together women are succeeding in bringing the matter into the public domain and providing services for victims and their children. Shelters and advocacy services have been established and reforms in the legal system have been initiated. Community-based counselling and self-help groups for men who batter are being formed to help men change their abusive attitudes and behaviours.

If you are not being battered by your male partner, chances are high that you are close to someone who is. Violence against wives will occur at least once during two-thirds of all marriages.

Before a community commitment to ending wife abuse will exist, all women must stand together and demand their rights to protection and freedom from assault. The first steps in this process are coming together, educating ourselves about the nature and extent of this violence, creating strategies with which our community can address the issue, helping women and children who live with abusive men and helping men to end their abusive patterns.

If this issue concerns you, you are invited to a meeting on March 24, 1987 at 1:30 p.m. Transportation and child care will be provided if needed. If you know any military spouses who live off base who might be interested please let them know. For further information (or the location which will be off base) please call:

CAROL 545-0761

MICHELLE 544-7997 (evenings)

** NOTE *** This meeting is in KINGSTON *****

FROM CALGARY

On September 17, 1986 at the OSSOMM General Meeting of the Calgary Chapter, Patricia Cooper, First Vice President of the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women was made an honorary member of our organization.

Pat is a talented, energetic woman who has come to the forefront to represent the concerns of Canadian women. We appreciate Pat's support of OSSOMM and all of the vital contacts she has provided us with. It is through Pat that OSSOMM became linked with the Women's Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF) - the organisation which is responsible for providing legal representation for our cause in the courts.

Pat is a former secondary school teacher, radio broadcaster and producer who holds a Bachelor of Arts in History from the University of Alberta and a teaching certificate from Lakehead University.

Pat's administrative talents were lent to the Calgary Y.W.C.A as their past president and as a serving board member until May 1986. She has been an active Board member of LEAF and has just recently been appointed as Board member of the United Way of Calgary.

Further to these positions, Pat is on the Executive of the Senate for the University of Calgary and is the past Chairperson of the Calgary Association of Voluntary Agencies. At present, she is involved with the Job Strategy Advisory Council in Calgary and with the Education Committee for the Chamber of Commerce. Pat is a founding member of the Alberta Coalition Against Pornography.

With all of these commitments Pat still finds time for her husband, three children and for the operation of a tree farm south of Calgary. That Pat would lend her talents and energy to further the aims of OSSOMM is something we are thankful for. She is an invaluable resource person and mentor and we are proud to claim her as a true friend of OSSOMM.

CRAIG REID: OSSOMM would like to acknowledge the efforts made by Mr. Craig Reid, Alderman in the City of Calgary, to further our request for a dental plan. Mr. Reid has made representation to the Prime Minister of Canada, to the Associate Minister of National Defence and most recently to all the Alberta Members of Parliament in an attempt to obtain dental coverage for spouses and children of serving members. We thank Mr. Reid for speaking out on behalf of the military community.

Those living in Calgary wishing more information or to take out a membership in OSSOMM may contact:

Marnie Draper 249-6285 or
Leslie Taylor 249-6582

DENTAL PLAN The Public Service now have a dental plan but we have no news about an extension of the service to the military or the RCMP families. Our original concern in starting the dental plan campaign was an excerpt from a Personnel Newsletter which stated that the above two groups would be excluded from such a dental plan. Several military officers informed us that the military would be included within a year of the initiation of any public service plan. So far there are no signs of our inclusion. We'll have to get more information on this one.

SENATE HEARINGS On June 19, 1986 Leslie Taylor from Calgary and Lucie Richardson from Kingston made presentations on behalf of Military Families before the Special Senate Committee on National Defence. The presentations were well received and greatly commended by the Senators.

FROM -OTTAWA The Foreign Service Community Association has sent us a letter of support and a have paid a substantial amount to become a sustaining member of OSSOMM. We are grateful for their encouragement. Here is an excerpt from an article in "LIAISON", an External Affairs Publication.

Military spouses are only asking for a minimal concession to the rights that all other Canadians take for granted - rights of free speech, association and non-discrimination.

They want permission to set up an organization to promote the welfare of military wives and families.

They want:

- to improve traffic safety on bases
- to help families ease the turmoil of moving
- to press the government for dental insurance, and
- to set up programs to deal with wife-battering.

LAW

In Defence of the Rights of All

Instead of encouraging these efforts, base commanders and even the Defence Minister have blocked them at every turn....

The Canadian Forces have shown themselves utterly out of touch with this fact:

— Women are now the legal equals of men, individuals in their own right, even if they wear uniforms or marry people who do.

The day has long passed when wives were part of the army's baggage train, a necessary problem of logistics. If Defence is too timid to admit that, it would do well to observe External Affairs, which has acknowledged the contributions of foreign service spouses and encourages their organization. The Defence Department's sexism is offensive, pointless and futile. To confuse spouses' self-help organizations with impermissible political action is just plain stupid.

(Excerpted from an editorial in the Ottawa Citizen, October 5, 1985)

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE SPOUSES-- We are working on policy changes in the area where a spouse's UIC is disallowed or reduced when the military member is posted to an isolated place. The official UIC response was that they could not distinguish between us and people who deliberately moved to these places in order to avoid work and collect unemployment. This is totally unacceptable. The UIC clearly have no difficulty distinguishing military early retirees from other people in order to exclude them from this UIC plan that military families put millions of dollars into year after year. We'll keep you informed about this.

FROM KINGSTON REC CENTRE: All residents of MQs were recently excluded from a survey by Pittsburgh Township Council about the need for a recreation centre saying that we are not "really" residents of the township. They even refused to give a copy of the survey to individuals from the base who requested one. Many residents are not aware that we pay \$1.4 million in transfer taxes to the township from the same fund that our MQ rents go into. We are really residents and we pay like real residents. Unfortunately, if the local press is correct, even the Base Commander did not object to our exclusion and nothing was heard from either the community council or the Mayor. If you feel that PMQ residents have been treated unfairly, watch for a petition which will be taken door-to-door shortly. Just a reminder that military members are not allowed to sign petitions so this will be for spouses only.

FOR ONTARIO RE: ONTARIO INCOME TAX Most other residents of Ontario are entitled to a property tax credit. MQ residents are not eligible because of some out-dated ideas and regulations. Because the sales tax rebate is tied to the property tax rebate we cannot collect either one. We pay rent, we pay transfer taxes at the same mill rate as other residents, we pay provincial income tax and provincial sales tax so why can we not get either one or both of these rebates that other residents of Ontario receive? If you are concerned about not being treated fairly or about not receiving this money you should send a letter to the Treasurer of Ontario, Robert Nixon, at Queen's Park and send a copy to your local MPP. You might also want to inform any friends you have in MQs in Ontario.
