

# Organization of Spouses Of Military Members (Canadian)

**Newsletter**  
November 1994

Greetings to old friends and new from Ottawa!

## News Flash

The Regulations to Bill C-55 was Gazetted on 19 October 1994!

We have many updates to report since our last Newsletter. First and foremost

**Bill C-55:** Draft regulations were published 7 June and OSOMM went on record as objecting to a number of them. Lucie Laliberte' prepared a response to Treasury Board which was presented in July. Her presentation was most effective and she succeeded in getting a number of changes made.

These changes reflect further protection and clarification of our rights although they do not cover all of the avenues explored. We are grateful nonetheless to have come this far and owe much to Lucie (et al.) for her (their) diligence and hard work.

1. In the Regulatory Impact Analysis Statement, the wording has been changed to clarify that the new regulations are not intended to determine the value of the pension between the parties. Rather, they determine how much Treasury Board will allow to be transferred out of the Plan. (i.e., enforcing the provisions of the court order or agreement).

2. The limitation period has been increased from 12 months to 18 months, to allow widows/divorcees who reside in other parts of the country (world) more time to apply after the death of their ex-spouses. It also allows lawyers more time to become aware of the regulations.

3. Death date remains unchanged. 29 September 1992 is considered to be the legal date when the regulations received Royal Assent, not 14 February 1991, the date the legislation was introduced in the House.

4. **Information to the spouse:** When a plan member provides written consent to Treasury Board, the Government will release information needed to aid in calculating the value of the pension. In the event the member refuses to sign the consent the existing regulations do not allow release of this information. We need to lobby on this issue.

5. The regulations will provide that women can request the maximum transfer value even after the transfer has been approved. A former spouse may need to obtain information after approval if she has merely accepted her husband's valuation. As well, on making requests for application forms, a pamphlet will be included to specify the right to request Treasury Board to make an estimate.

**Book Launching:** took place 20 October 1994 at Parliament Hill in the Commonwealth Room in Centre Block. Wine and music, a bountiful array

of hors d'oeuvres (supplied by OSOMM) and a large turnout of guests provided an auspicious beginning to the sale of *No Life Like It*. Authors Deborah Harrison and Lucie Laliberte' attended to personally sign copies of their book. It proved to be a gala evening in prestigious surroundings and all of us wish Deborah and Lucie great success. This book represents the first undertaking to show military life from the perspective of members' wives, and is at once thought-provoking, unsettling, and insightful.

Copies may be purchased through OSOMM at \$20.00 each tax included.

**Acknowledgements:** As well, a huge thank you to members themselves for their help and generous contribution of food, wine and flowers for the book launching. It could never have been the success it was without you! Also a thank-you to Marlene Catterall without whose help we would not have been able to get the historic Commonwealth Room in Centre Block.

**Court Challenge:** In May a vote was taken to change lawyers from Nelligan-Power to Weir and Foulds of Toronto. The Management Committee at Weir & Foulds has agreed to take on our case and a cheque for \$1,200. has been sent to cover disbursements. They may also set up a Charitable Foundation that will allow us to give receipts for donations which in turn are tax deductible. The Court Challenge program will be in effect as of this October and we will reapply for funding.

**Update:** Remember Sherrie Clark who challenged her lawyer's fee in court and succeeded in getting it reduced by 85%? It wasn't the end, alas. Her lawyer subsequently opposed the judgement by filing a Motion in court, changed his mind and withdrew, then filed again, seemingly because Sherrie had earlier registered a complaint with the Law Society! Oral examinations ensued ending in a court hearing 24 January 1994. Several OSOMM members attended. W5 learned of her case and it was aired in February. The Motion was heard and dismissed. She reiterates the importance of

trying mediation, choosing a recommended lawyer and keeping careful records of all negotiations.

**Annual General Meeting:** Our first AGM took place at Simard Hall, University of Ottawa, 14 May 1994. To begin, a brief history of OSOMM was outlined by Lucie Laliberte'. Nominations and election of members of the executive were made and the vote was carried unanimously. Lucie Laliberte', Gaila Friars, and Marnie Draper allowed their names to stand as Directors for the term of one year. Other elections were:

- Administration - Lucie Laliberte'
- Finance - Chantall Fortin
- Internal - Betty Alce
- External - Gaila Friars
- Statistics - Catherine Patterson-Kidd
- Fund Raising - Marnie Draper

A discussion followed stating OSOMM's tentative goals, namely,

- a) Apply to the Secretary of State for funding, explore other fund-raising means to have the financial capability to establish and maintain a national office and hire an executive director;
- b) Membership drive;
- c) making sure our history as a political movement is documented;
- d) pension subcommittee will continue to work together and lobby effectively. The chair of the sub-committee may sit on the executive committee.

Guest speakers for the afternoon session included Peggy Cameron, Rudy Loiselle, Gaila Friars, Evelyn Drescher, Wendy Cole and Deborah Harrison.

Peggy Cameron spoke about finances and the importance of having a Power of Attorney, a Will and personal insurance. She stressed the value of attending seminars, reading pertinent material, budgeting, income splitting, and finding a woman stockbroker.

Rudy Loiselle dealt with Bill C-55, methodology of PDBA and the concerns of OSOMM, and discussed the types of investment of lump sum settlements available for former spouses. He also affirmed recognition of marriage after age 60 as part of pension reform.

Gaila Friars spoke about isolation of military wives and the difficulty in keeping connected when facing constant moves. One feature of isolation is the battered wife, and her need for help resulted in the development of the Resource Centres. OSOMM is the group that has been instrumental in this development across military bases.

Evelyn Drescher talked about the value of mothers as working women and the need to convince government that their work is part of the partnership, hence pensions should be awarded accordingly.

Dr. Wendy Cole, who works at the Royal Ottawa Hospital spoke about the difficulties facing wives and families in military life, the absolute financial and emotional boundaries that are set up, and the violence against women that continues without due process of law.

Deborah Harrison informed us that the book *No Life Like It* published by James Lorimer Co. would be launched this fall.

It was agreed that a copy of the book would be granted to each of the guest speakers.

The next AGM will be held in May 1995.

**Acknowledgements:** OSOMM would like to thank Marlene Catterall, Sheila Finestone, Peter Milliken and Senator Frith for their valued time and support.

**Fund Raising** Activities this past year included a garage and bake sale, a fashion show and card sales. Fresh ideas are always welcome (help, please!), as revenues need replenishing. Loraine Whillans has suggested selling coupon books.

**A Gift in your Will to OSOMM:** Bequests of all sizes are an important source of support to OSOMM. Specific Bequest To pay the sum of \$ to the Organization of Spouses of Military Members to be administered as they see fit.

In lieu of flowers... Memorial donations to OSOMM would be appreciated.

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Membership \$10.00 mail cheque to:

OSOMM  
116 Albert Street, Suite 305  
Ottawa, ON K1P 5G3

Name:

Address:

Donations welcomed:  
copy and share this newsletter

#### **On women ...by women**

People call me a feminist whenever I express sentiments that differentiate me from a door mat or a prostitute (Rebecca West 1913).

This is a time in history when women's voices must be heard, or forever be silenced. It's not because we think better than men, but we think differently. It's not women against men, but women and men. It's not that the world would have been better if women had run it, but that the world will be better when we as women, who bring our own perspective, share in running it (Betty Bumpers 1985).

It occurred to me when I was thirteen and wearing white gloves and Mary Janes and going to dancing school, that no one should have to dance backwards all their lives (Jill Ruckelshaus 1974).

I was elected by the women of Ireland who, instead of rocking the cradle, rocked the system (Mary Robinson 1990).

If...Society will not admit of woman's free development then society must be remodelled (Elizabeth Blackwell).