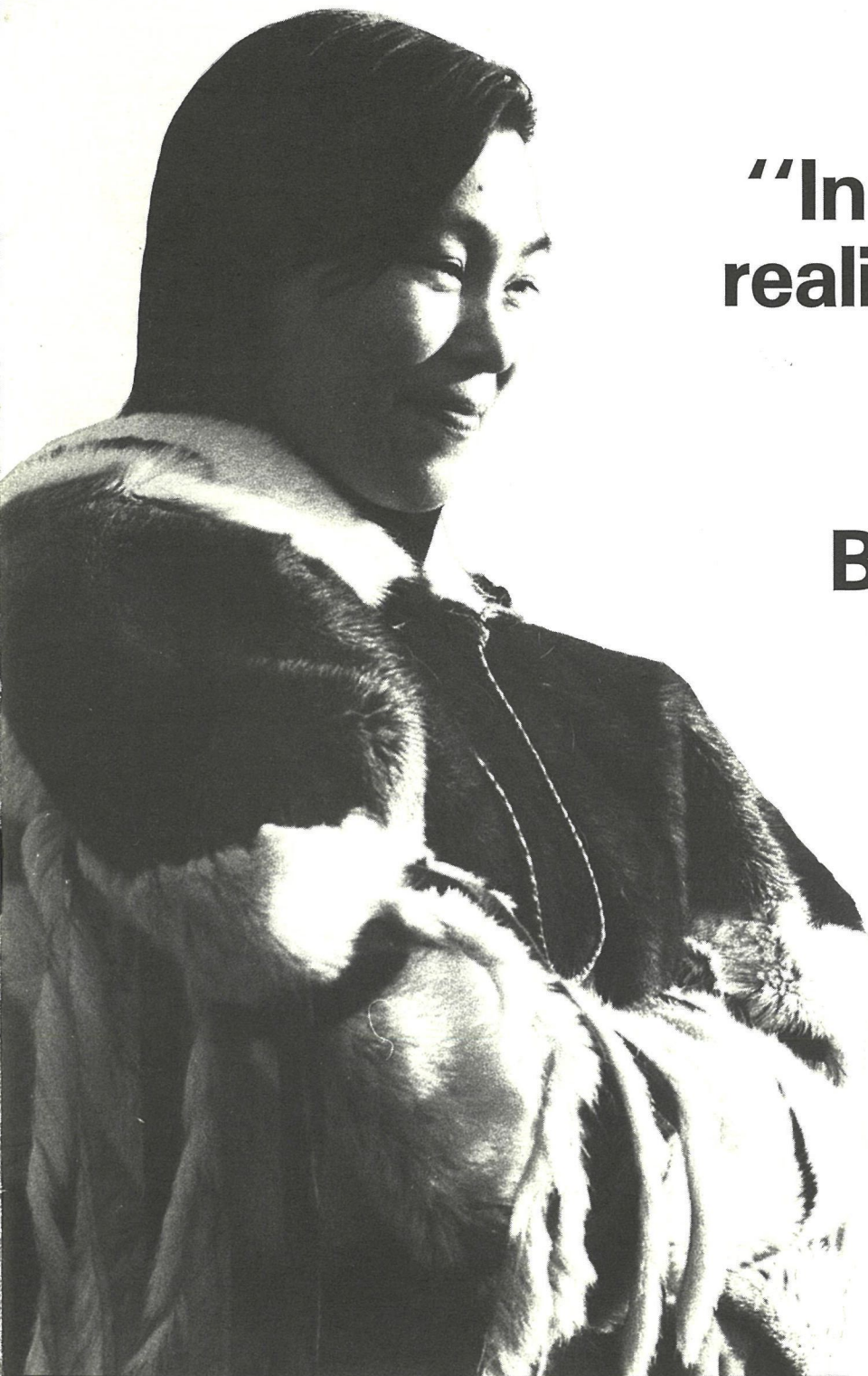
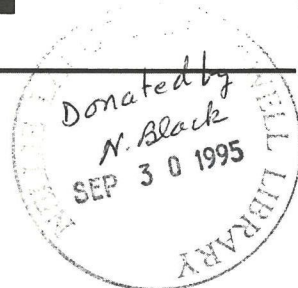
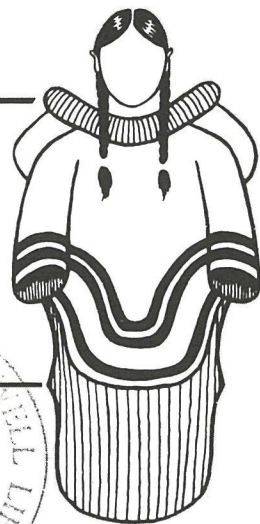


Suvaguuq

Inuit Women's Association Newsletter

July, 1985 Volume 1, Number 1



“Inuit women are realizing their own potential”

— Jeela Moss-Davies
President, IWA

Board members make progress

AGM a great success

IWA profiles



President's Message

Dear Inuit Friends,

It gives me pleasure to write this letter on our first newsletter. I know that newsletters, or just something to read, is not as effective as having a person to person encounter because it is just a one way communication, but with this vast Inuit land of ours, we have to settle for it, at times, as the best alternative due to very real factors.

The past two years have been very much an eye opener for me because those Inuit that I have been fortunate enough to have discussions with about Inuit women having their own organization, have been so very supportive and critical in a lot of areas.

The more people that I talked to, the more I realized the need for Inuit women to feel the sense of not being alone in their ideas and thoughts.

I have encountered people who understand the need and support an organization for Inuit women, as well as those who are not too sure about the whole business. I have talked to those people who think such an organization would add further confusion to the already existing confusion that Inuit are going through presently.

The damaging expression "you are just a woman" may not seem so damaging when it is being expressed either by a parent or by someone for whom a woman might have a great respect. But all the same, it can have a negative impact on a woman sometimes in her life, because it does discourage her from being independent. It discourages her standing on her own two feet where she is able to think practical thoughts and take practical actions.

To be able to think on one's own feet and to take action on one's own thoughts should not make a person feel less, or feel that they are invading someone else's ground. Besides, if her spouse is a sensible man, it is also a plus to have a woman who can do such a thing and respect it.

Inuit women have begun to establish local womens groups in most of their communities, and one of the questions usually asked is, "How do they fit in with the Inuit Women's Association? What issues do they talk about?"

The Inuit womens groups belong to the women in the community. They do not belong to the Inuit Women's Association, or to anyone, except the community that

they are from. The Inuit Women's Association will provide the necessary know-how to start a local women's group, but it is up to the local group to function by itself as much as possible. The Inuit Women's Association belongs to the local women's group and to all Inuit women, and functions solely to represent Inuit womens' issues and wishes.

The issues that should be of concern to the local womens' groups are really up to the members themselves. Whatever concerns that the women in a community have, they are the concerns that may be dealt with by the women in the community. To demonstrate how to identify problem areas for Inuit women, we shall include in this issue the aims and objectives of this Association and why our objectives are such as they are. We did not dream up the objectives of this Association. We tried to be realistic about the situation that Inuit women are in today.

The priorities of each local group are different from others and the priorities of the Association are also the compilation of the concerns that have been voiced out by women from different communities.

The general areas of concern to the Association are:

- 1) Health
- 2) Education
- 3) Socio-economics
- 4) Culture

With all the issues of concern to the Association, there are also growing pains that the Association experiences. One of the main ones is a lack of sufficient funds to meet all the priorities that the Association faces. One of the greater impacts of this lack of funding is being unable to visit communities to reaffirm the unity that was established during the first annual meeting in Igloolik this year. We realize the importance of communication between the communities to compare notes on the development and progress of the local women's groups, just so that they do not feel isolated and alone. To overcome this in a very minor way, we shall do some notes in this newsletter, as it progresses, about the community groups.

In closing, I would like to say that the past two years have been very exciting to see, because there is more awareness about Inuit women from the general public, and from other Inuit organizations.

I would also like to take this time to thank the various Inuit organizations for having given the Association the essential support that it needs. Most of all, it has been very exciting to see Inuit women realizing their own potential as individuals and as a group, to deal with their particular situation. For that I am very grateful to all of you, and I shall try to continue to do my best, to my abilities, to ensure that the Association is established to meet the needs of all Inuit women.

Taakvaussi

Jeela Alilkatuktuk Moss-Davies



Editor's Note

As the Inuit Women's Association develops and people's concerns grow, we feel that there is a need to keep the public informed of what IWA is doing. In the past year, IWA has been involved in many issues concerning women and Inuit in general. There has been much progress within the IWA in establishing itself as an organization. Some events include the opening of a new office in the ITC building in Ottawa, election of a new president and board members, and the hiring of new staff to meet the expanding needs of the office. Since the organization of IWA, there has been involvement with other native organizations concerning women's issues. We hope that by reading our newsletter, you will be better informed and that you will inform us of your concerns related to IWA. You may write to us at:

Inuit Women's Association
c/o Nora Jarrett
176 Gloucester Street
Ottawa, Ontario



We feel that it is important to credit the founding board members in the establishment of Inuit Women's Association, but it is up to the current board members to keep the improvement of the organization in progress. We would like to take this time to commend the current board members for their efforts and time in keeping this progress going. We will be publishing profiles on the current board members in later issues of this newsletter.



Back row: Anna Samsack; Helen Tologonak; Lizzie Ittinuar. Middle row: Inooya Inuk; Jeela Moss Davies; Susie Koaha; Okpik Pitseolak. Front row: Rosie Veevee; Eva Voisey; Andrea Webb and son.

Aims & Objectives

The aims and objectives of the Inuit Women's Association of Canada are:

1. To unite the Inuit women of Canada;
2. To act and be recognized as the official political action group for Inuit women;
3. To familiarize our children with Inuit values, heritage, culture and language;
4. To work towards better conditions for all Inuit women;
5. To motivate Inuit women to realize their potential as individuals and as a collective group;
6. To promote self-confidence and self-reliance amongst Inuit women;
7. To encourage Inuit women to take their rightful place in society;
8. To work for the betterment of individual, family and community conditions through social and economic action;
9. To promote the rights of Inuit women and children;
10. To push for equality of Inuit women in all levels of Canadian governmental/non-governmental structures;
11. To encourage the involvement of Inuit women in all levels of Canadian society; and
12. To encourage communication between Inuit women and all aboriginal peoples.



Social Issues a Main Concern

Igloolik NWT was the setting for the IWA annual general meeting in January, when 140 Inuit women from all across Canada gathered there for the week long meetings. Some members from the NWT and six ladies from Alaska were unable to make it due to bad weather. Resource people from various government groups were there for the meetings, as well as the media. Three women were invited as special guests. They were Pitseolak Kelly of Frobisher Bay who is a midwife and film actress; Daisy Watt of Kuulluaq, a well respected lady of the North; and Kilabuck Kooneeluisie of Broughton Island, who is an experienced midwife and prominent elder in her community.

The meetings were held in the gym so that there would be plenty of room for the women. Public participation was welcomed, and community people crowded in to observe the women and their concerns. The main thrust of the week's discussion was the topic of economic development.



Left—Theresa Laqtaq and woman from Northern Quebec

A presentation was given on "What is Economic Development" and a panel of four resource people went on to explain how one could go about setting up a small business. Other areas of concern and discussion were marketing, daycare and how to go about setting them up. "What is lobbying, and how to go about lobbying effectively" was explained to the women as well as "how to apply for loans, grants or funds." Social issues which are also a great concern to Inuit women were brought to the table for discussion. Joan Riggs and Jeela Moss-Davies gave a presentation on the usefulness of midwifery. Women were given a chance to air their concerns on youth problems related to drug and alcohol abuse, as well as battered women and abortion.

The women discussed the issue of prostitution by young Inuit girls, a serious problem in urban areas. Education and training were also on the agenda, with workshops being given on what is presently available in those areas. As well, a presentation was given on growing vegetables in the North, which surprisingly enough, is possible.

An impressive display of various types of handicraft from across the North was set up. There were very many different kinds

of sewing, beadery, woven baskets and a detailed shaman outfit which had a lot of work put into it.

During the evening, after the meetings, entertainment brought laughter and lots of fun for the delegates and the whole community. The Greenland women sang and members of the women's group played the guitar and accordion. Newcomers to the North were also given an introduction to a good, old-fashioned square dance, which aside from a couple of crushed toes, was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

The final event before packing up to go back home was the election of the president and board members which takes place every two years. Jeela Moss-Davies was re-elected as president of IWA. Eva Voisey was elected as the vice-president and Elise Attagutaluk as the secretary-treasurer.

The AGM was a great success, and the kind hospitality given by the people of Igloolik was much appreciated by the women. The women returned home with good thoughts of the occasion upon which all the Inuit women gathered in one place at one time, not only to air their concerns, but also to get to know one another's ways better. ○

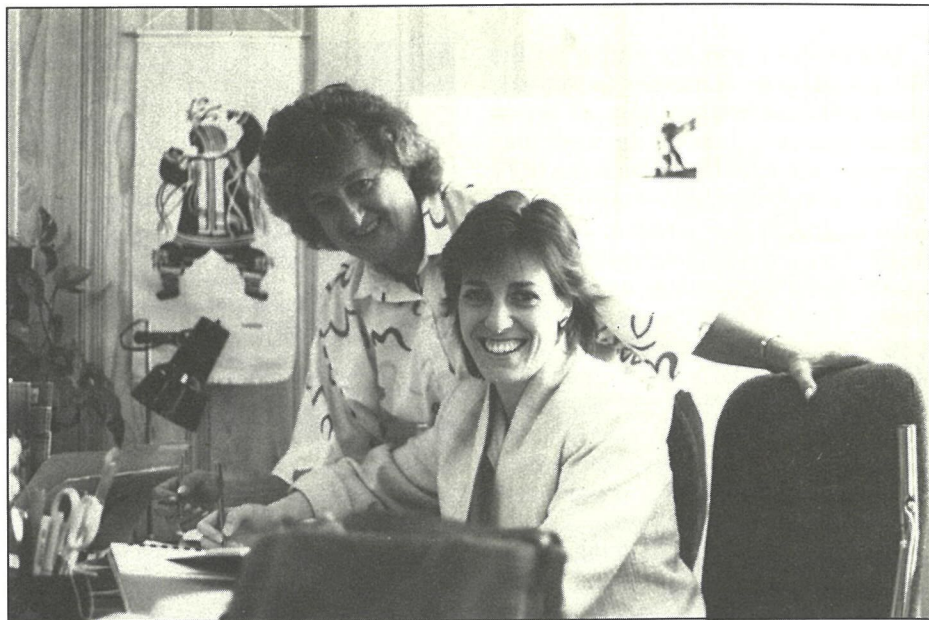


Pitsealalaaq Kelly



Mackintosh

Janet Mackintosh was hired as the office manager for Inuit Women's Association in July 1984 and was recently promoted to her new position as the executive director. She is a native Ottawa and graduate of Ottawa's Carleton University. Her background includes social work and business administration. Janet worked with the Inuit Committee on National Issues (ICNI) as the executive administrator before joining Inuit Women's Association. Since joining IWA, Janet has seen a lot of progress and she feels that IWA has a great deal of potential. "We will be able to meet our goals and objectives as we progress, but I regret that we are so tightly budgeted. I wish we could hire more people in various parts of the North, so that we could meet the needs and concerns of all regions in the North". Janet enjoys her work and likes the friendly atmosphere at IWA in the new office. ○



Janet Mackintosh; Sheila Davies—left

Immaroitok



Immaroitok

Bernadette Immaroitok was the first staff member hired in the new Ottawa office. She started out as the assistant co-ordinator and recently became the constitutional co-ordinator. Bernadette's training in the translating and interpreting field has been an asset to her career. She worked as an interpreter-translator for eleven years for government Inuit organizations, as well as freelanced. Bernadette worked in Montreal and Frobisher Bay for CBC North for a year and a half. She says that "once we get off the ground there is

a lot we can deal with from the grassroots level as a national organization on Inuit women and social issues. There is a lot we can contribute to ITC. It's just a matter of organizing, and co-operation among the various regions."

Bernadette has two sons and she has lived in Ottawa for four years. ○

Curley

Mali Curley began working with IWA in January 1985. She is the interpreter-translator and a liaison officer for IWA. She makes sure that all written material which goes through the office is translated into English and Inuktitut for distribution to various regions in the North. Mali was born in Coral Harbour and raised in Frobisher Bay. She spent two years in Ottawa learning to be a hairdresser, and has worked as an interpreter-translator for the medical service ship, C.D. Howe. Mali has worked as a para-legal for Maliganik Tukisinarvik in Frobisher Bay, as well as freelancing. ○



Curley



Voisey

Eva Voisey, as mayor of her home community of Whale Cove from 1980 to 1983, was responsible for the building of a new road to the airstrip, the construction of a new water lake to provide better drinking water for the community and improved access for amrine vessels. Now she is just as busy as Vice-President of the IWA. EVA's main concerns are education and employment. With five children of her own, Eva would like to see the creation of daycare centres. Before starting the local women's group in Whale Cove, Eva worked as a classroom assistant in the local school and was the secretary

treasurer for the local education committee. She was a member of the health committee for one year and worked as a government liaison officer for the GNWT Executive Department for two years.

Eva, as a member of the Northern Drug and Alcohol Abuse Program and the Northern Alcohol and Drug Curriculum Program is very concerned about the problem of solvent sniffing in the North and hopes to see a solution to this problem because it is destroying many healthy young minds. Eva friendly personality is an asset to her position as Vice-President.



Voisey

Cousins

Mary Panigusiq Cousins is a 40-year-old Inuk woman from Pond Inlet who has played a large part in encouraging Inuit to develop. During the days when Inuit organizations were still a concept, Mary was busy encouraging people that such organizations were possible. She also had a hand in the formation of ITC. Mary feels that "Our organizations are very important to us. IWA is an exciting and unspoiled organization and they still have a lot to explore. They have a lot of confidence in themselves culturally, as well as being influential in the modern ways, which, too, is very important," she says.

Currently, Mary is teaching Inuktitut and Inuit culture at the Gordon Roberts Education Centre in Frobisher Bay. As

well, she is taking a teaching course as a part-time student through McGill University. Mary thinks the education system in the North has been ignored and feels very unprepared in teaching the culture and history of the Inuit people. She says, "Inuit should be more involved in working towards getting a good curriculum."

Mary's fluency in Inuktitut has proven to be beneficial to many Inuit. She taught Inuktitut for ten years at the Frobisher Bay Education Centre and she is highly regarded by people she has taught in the past, which in itself reflects her capabilities.

Before moving to Frobisher Bay, Mary worked in Grise Fiord for the NWT

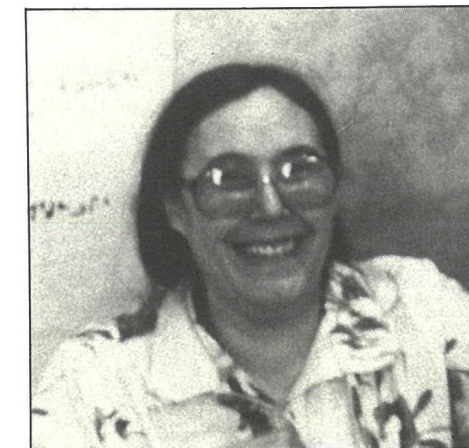
housing corporation when the government first started building houses there. She worked on the medical services ship, the C.D. Howe, for three years as a translator. In the early days of Inuktitut Magazine, Mary worked as the editor for that magazine, where she did all of the interpreting and translating, as well as write articles on Inuit history and culture.

Mary would like to be more active in the community, but her work toward improving her academic skills limits her involvement. She remains, however, a member of the film production group, Nunatsiamut, which is now a branch of Inuit Broadcasting Corporation (IBC), as well as the Baffin Women's Association.

Mary likes to take time out to relax sometimes. She does so by getting out her water colors, oil paints, and brush. Her paintings are said to be "real works of art." Mary says that since she is not a "showy person", she does not push her work. She enjoys the sheer pleasure that painting affords her. Toonik Tyme did borrow some of her paintings for display during their festivities this year in Frobisher Bay. Mary is married to Roger and they have six children. ○

Veevee

Rosie Veevee feels that local women's groups have a lot to offer the community. She had a hand, as a member of the local women's committee in Pangnirtung in raising money for the support of search and rescue missions. Rosie is also a member of the local health committee and the Anglican Women's Auxiliary. She has worked for the school as a janitor and has worked at odd jobs as a cook. Rosie has six children. She is currently a General Board member of IWA. ○



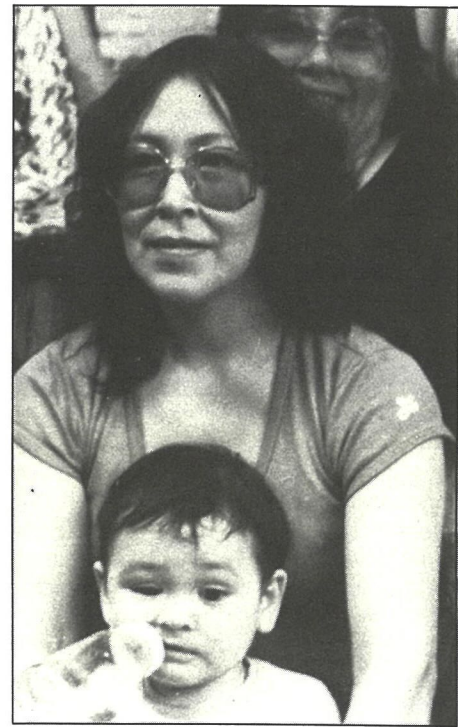
VeeVee

Founding Board Members



Webb

Andrea Webb was influential in starting Inuatsuk Women's Group in Happy Valley, Labrador. Currently, Andrea is the Labrador member for IWA. She was recently re-elected during the IWA annual general meeting in Igloolik which she attended. She said, "I didn't think it possible to have Inuit women from all across Canada and Greenland in one place at the same time." She was pleased to see that it was possible. Andrea's fluency in Inuktitut has enabled her to help her



Webb

Napayok

Annie Napayok of Eskimo Point is currently a member of the Ukkivik Residence Council and chairperson of the Alcohol and Drug Committee. Anna, as a mother of nine children, is concerned about education in family planning, Inuit history and culture. She would like to see them being taught in schools more. She would also like to see the creation of more sewing centres and the preservation of traditional sewing methods. The lack of health, medical and translating services in the North bothers Annie, and she hopes that IWA will be helpful in these areas.

people. She has taught doctors, nurses and social workers Inuktitut at the Melville Hospital in Goose Bay, Labrador. She worked as an interpreter-translator at the Memorial Home Hospital and Labrador Legal Services and has translated stories for the magazine "Them Days". Labrador Legal Services hired her as a native court

Semigak

Passa Semigak, with seven children of her own feels that Inuit women should form groups to deal with problems that young people in the North face today. Passa is from Kangirsuk, Northern Quebec and is a member of the local health committee and the Anglican Women's

Pitseolak

Okpik Pitseolak of Cape Dorset worked for the past four years as chairperson of the local social services committee. She has worked as a secretary for the local health committee and is a member of Kinngait Aulatsijit, a distress centre in Cape Dorset. Okpik would like to see



Pitseolak

worker after she left Nain where she had worked in the hospital as a nursing assistant. She also worked as a chambermaid for the Canadian Air Force for three years. Andrea hopes there will be more recognition of equal rights for native women. She has six children.

Auxiliary Chapter there. She has worked as a cook and housekeeper in the past but now keeps her self busy at home. Passa feels that as IWA continues to develop, they will achieve a lot in terms of dealing with major social problems.

women's issues aired more openly and the importance of equal pay for women stressed. She has four children. Okpik was re-elected as a general board member of IWA in January and her main concerns are for marital, youth and drug-related problems.



Founding Board Members

Ittinuar

Lizzie Ittinuar is the mother of eleven children and she is the board member for the Keewatin area. Lizzie helped start the local women's group in Rankin Inlet where she also is a member of the Co-op.

Lizzie would like to see the creation of sewing centres and hopes to see more involvement by Inuit women in decision-making.



Ittinuar

Gordon

Annie C. Gordon is currently a member of the Alcohol Board of the NWT, COPE, and the Alcohol and Drug Abuse in Aklavik. She has been a member of the language commission for four years and works part-time as a janitor at the school in Aklavik. Annie has six children. She would like to see IWA help people in the North more.

Ipeelie

Mary Ipeelie is from Frobisher Bay where she is currently employed at the Frobisher Bay Arts and Crafts Centre. Mary is an experienced midwife. She assisted in the Frobisher Bay hospital for three years as a midwife. She is a past board member of Ikaluit Co-op in Frobisher Bay and a present member of the Anglican Women's Auxiliary. She has been involved in helping battered women as well as counselling school drop-outs. Mary feels there should be more information directed from IWA to Inuit women in general.

Machmer

Olassie Machmer is self-employed in Pond Inlet where she operates a television cable business. She worked in Arctic Bay for two years as the assistant secretary manager to the Hamlet Council before moving to Pangnirtung. In Pangnirtung, Olassie did on-the-job training for Parks Canada as a clerk secretary. She also worked as a secretary treasurer with the education society and as an airline ticket agent.

Olassie has four children. She would like to see the creation of sewing centres and hopes the IWA will be more active in the economic development of the North as far as women are concerned.

Samsack

Anna Samsack was re-elected as a regional board member for Inukjuak, Quebec. Anna went back to school to adult education classes and her main concern is the high rate of unemployment among Inuit women—a problem she would like to see corrected. Though Anna has six children of her own, she has worked in the boarding home for school children.



Samsack

Koaha

Susie Koaha is a member of the Ikalok-totiaak Ladies Group in Cambridge Bay and she helps organize holiday activities for them. Susie feels that IWA is very helpful to society and that it will be influential in social issues. She is concerned about battered women and feels there is a great need for shelters in the North. Susie has six children.



Leadership for Women

The IWA board members flew to Ottawa during the last week of April for a week-long workshop on leadership. The twelve members and staff of IWA were instructed by a team of two from the Native

American Training/Support System who gave in-depth information on how to go about asserting leadership skills. How to share information, how to establish a network with other groups and organizations,

and how to lobby and seek funding, were some of the topics dealt with. Terminology which is often used at meetings was explained as well. Many doubts and concerns the women had when they arrived were replaced by a sense of direction and a sure knowledge of how to go about accomplishing their designated goals.

The workshop was a success, providing the women with a clearer understanding of what their roles as board members requires of them. ○



Standing: Bernadette Immaroitok Left to Right—Rosie VeeVee, Jeela Moss-Davies, Helen Tologanak

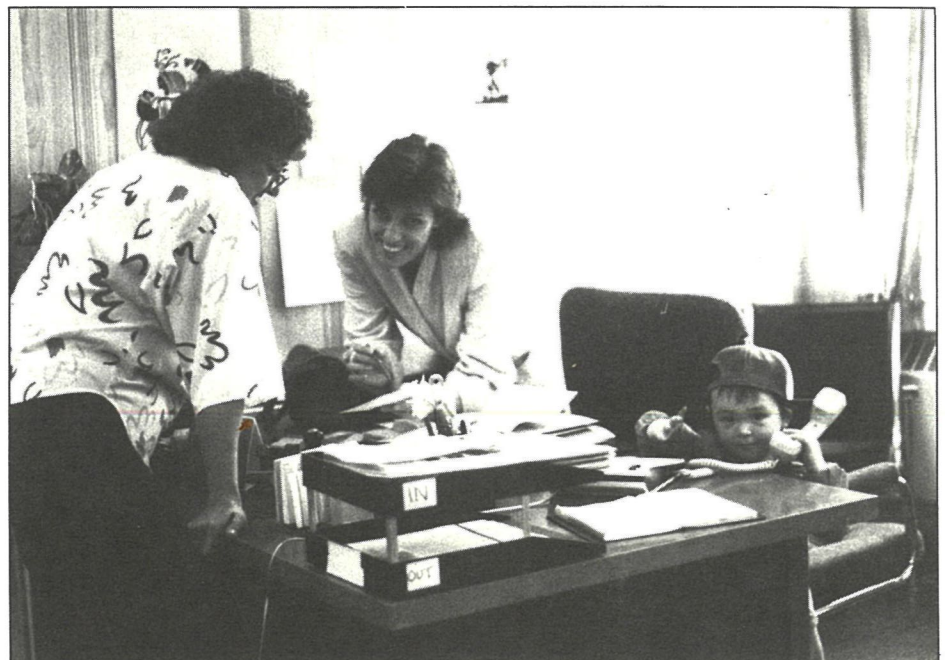


Susie Koaha (left) and Inooya Inuk

Opinions

The Pauktuutit Newsletter would like to publish comments from our readers. If you have a comment to make regarding the IWA issues related to Inuit women, please write to us. Our address is:

Inuit Women's Association
4th Floor
176 Gloucester Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K2P 0A6



Sheila Davies (left) and Janet Mackintosh.

