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13

Women's Bulletin News Femmes

Vol. 1, No. 7 May 1987 mai



IWW 1987 March. Over 700 participants marched through the streets of Ottawa to mark International Women's Day, March 8, as the climax to a week of activities. (photo by Gilles Benoit)

Secretary of State Women's Programme Under Attack

Over the past few months, dozens of women's groups across Canada have sent in letters or briefs, or made presentations to parliament's Standing Committee on Secretary of State. The committee is investigating whether to change the goals and criteria of the department's Women's Program.

Most of the pressure for this inquiry has come from REAL Women, who have twice been refused funding because they do not meet the Women's Program criteria. The Program funds groups and projects devoted to improving the status of women and working for equality for women as defined in the Charter of Rights.

The Standing Committee asked International Women's Week to make a presentation, probably in response to the media-created controversy about Secretary of State funding for IWW. Highlights from the brief are outlined below.

* the scope and diversity of the Week were described, for those MP's who might have thought it was a narrow or exclusive event, e.g. 200 groups, 220 events for women, children and general public, 10,000 participants, funding from a range of public and private sources (for more

information on this year's Week, see elsewhere in this newspaper)

* the damaging and false misrepresentation of the Week by certain media and certain MP's (some of whom were present at the Standing Committee meeting) was presented, together with the actual facts in response to each inaccuracy. Several MP's did not seem to understand the importance of women-only workshops on topics such as sexual assault or motherhood. Some showed a very emotional prejudice against lesbians, and were visibly upset that IWW thought these women should be part of the Week.

* IWW questioned the reason for the inquiry. "We do not feel the complaints raised by REALW should be sufficient to initiate this type of inquiry. We are quite sure that the government of Canada receives far more complaints and concerns about defense spending, and yet to our knowledge there has been no public inquiry into the defense budget."

* in response to a question from the Committee, IWW defined "equality" in this way: "The equality we speak of is *equality of choice* - sufficient opportunities and resources available for all people to

exercise their choices and reach their full potential." The presentors went on to say that, in order to support this equality of choice, "feminism has to be diverse and inclusive because of the wide range of options women choose. Each woman is different and make different choices in her life. Consequently, the number of choices presented in feminism are very diverse as well." The presentors went on to give examples of the range of choices supported within the framework of feminism, e.g. in family structures, in economic equality, in sexual orientation, in reproductive options, etc.

* the presentation also outlined IWW's experience with REALW, in which REALW misrepresented and attacked feminism in general and IWW in particular, as well as publishing hate literature against lesbians. Finally, IWW said "To our knowledge, they have no open meetings and do not provide any services to women."

Recommendations from IWW included

1. funding should be for groups that work towards equality for women, using a definition of equality based on the principle of "equality of choice"

2. there should be an objective, professional

evaluation of the Women's Program, with substantial input from women's groups, before the Committee or the Minister make any decisions.

3. there should be an ongoing consultation process between Secretary of State and women's groups

4. funding criteria should take account of regional disparities, and the inter-related issues of race, class and gender.

5. funding for the Women's Program should be increased.

6. discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation should be prohibited by the Canadian Human Rights Act and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The reaction of MP's at the presentation varied. Several conservative MP's, including some who were not even members of the Committee, became very emotional at several points, in particular around the discussion of REALW and lesbian participation. Many points made by IWW had to be repeated several times, because MP's simply did not want to hear what was being said, and insisted on distorting IWW's views.

Other MP's, particularly Bill Rompkey (Lib) and Margaret Mitchell (NDP) were

quite calm and interested in the information presented. Rompkey offered to give his time for questions to the IWW presentors to elaborate their points as they chose.

Lobby by women's groups still important

Although the public hearings phase of the Committee's investigation is over, it is still important for women and women's groups to make your voices heard. The Committee now has to write their report, which will probably take several weeks, so it is a critical period for influencing them.

After the Committee has completed its report, the next step will lie with David Crombie, Minister of Secretary of State. He will decide whether he wants to ask Cabinet to change the the funding criteria of the Women's Program. He also needs to know the views of women, so phone him as well.

Geoff Scott, Chair 995-5822
Ricardo Lopez 992-5373
Jean-Luc Joncas 996-7046
Margaret Mitchell 992-6030
Allan Pietz 992-8072
Bill Rompkey 996-4630
Bill Scott 992-0611

David Crombie 997-9900

**Women's News
Bulletin Femmes**

Collective for this issue: Lynne Tyler, Frances Vernon, Donna Munro, Donna Quince, Joan Riggs, Joan Muller

Women's News is a publication of the Ottawa International Women's Week Committee. We publish 10 times a year, missing March and one month in the summer. It consists of women's events; and news. You are invited to send us your information. We reserve the right to edit all material submitted. The newsletter is available to all groups on our mailing list and at the Ottawa Women's Bookstore and Women's Place. If you would like to receive the newsletter by mail, send \$5 to \$10, depending on what you can afford, to cover mail and photocopying costs.

Nous allons publier 10 bulletins par année, sauf durant le mois de Mars et un mois d'été. Il s'agira d'événements et de nouvelles concernant les femmes. Envoyez-nous vos commentaires et de l'information. Le bulletin sera disponible à tous les groupes sur notre liste d'envoi ainsi qu'à la Librairie des femmes d'Ottawa et Place aux Femmes. Si vous désirez recevoir le bulletin par courrier, envoyez de 5\$ à 10\$, dépendant de vos moyens financiers, pour couvrir les frais de poste et de photocopie.

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All correspondence should be directed to International Women's Week, P.O. Box 76, Stn. D. Ottawa, K1P 5C5. (613)233-2691



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IWW/SIF
 PO Box / CP 76,
 Stn / Succ. B
 Ottawa K1P 6C3
 233-2691

**Opinion
Page**

INTERNATIONAL ANGLE

I am writing on behalf of MATCH International Centre to congratulate you on organizing and coordinating an excellent range of International Women's Week activities this year.

MATCH is a national women's organization and development agency based in Ottawa and our aim is to work toward a global improvement in the status of women and the strengthening of support between women of different cultures and origins.

We believe that International Women's Day is an excellent opportunity to raise awareness about these issues as our local supporters participate in IWD activities across the country.

MATCH strongly supports the concept of the week in Ottawa and the national office has been happy to participate here for the last several years. We have always found the week to be well organized, well publicized, creative and educational. It is a very effective vehicle for conveying our message to a wide spectrum of women. In addition, we very much appreciate the diversity of women's organizations that participate with us and feel that the week plays a vital role in strengthening our links and cooperative relationships with each other. I think the outreach accomplished this year deserves special commendation.

Finally, we wish we could thank each and every woman who devoted time and energy to making IWW the success it was. Since we can't, please know that I speak for many when I say your work is crucial and much appreciated. Your commitment and dedication does not go unacknowledged by the women's groups and women who benefit.

Once again, thank you all for making IWW a possibility in Ottawa and giving us one more important avenue to put our feminism into practice.

In sisterhood,

Sherry Galey
 Program Officer



Photo by Gilles Benoit

THANK YOU

I would be interested in obtaining your newsletter for this year. I would also like to take the time to thank those women who made I.W.D. (week) Ottawa an incredible success, despite some of the negative political feedback regarding the lesbian workshops. I was only able to partake in the weekend activities, but nevertheless had an incredible experience in Ottawa. Thanks again and good luck for next year and the years to follow. I may be interested in the future to submit an article or two. What are your guidelines and deadlines for this? Thank-you!

Noreen A. Wren

WORKSHOP IDEAS FOR NEXT YEAR

The following are some of the suggestions for workshops next year received by IWW. More ideas and sponsors are welcome.

- *Female Magic-Meditation
- *How to Deal with the Media and Get the Message Across
- *Peace and Women
- *Tax Credits for Moms at Home and Homemakers Pensions
- *Christian vs. Atheist Feminism
- *Native Women's Voices and Concerns Vis-a-vis Feminism
- *Effective Quarreling
- *Younger Women's Involvement in Women's Movement
- *Women's Health Issues
- *Speculum Workshop: Self-Examination
- *Part-time Work and Job Sharing
- *Class and Class Prejudice
- *Self-Defence
- *Mentally Disabled Women
- *Feminism: more info on Political/Legal Situation of Women
- *Comedy
- *Effective Communication
- *Financial Information for Senior Women
- *Lesbians Against Gravity and the Silly Acronym Flat Earth Society Dinner (!!)

LESBIAN ONLY EVENTS

First of all, please let me congratulate you all on a well organized, enjoyable and incredibly fun-filled week!!! I really enjoyed the events and workshops that I attended. I'm already anticipating next years WWM.

I have only one suggestion for next year. The "L" in the legend column for lesbian only events was placed in the wrong place, ie. due to the very small numbers of lesbian only events. (I think about 5 or 6 out of over 200). I feel that it would have been much better to designate the lesbian only events in the description of the workshop/event itself. I understand the need for lesbian visibility but not at the risk of losing major funding. By having the "L" it made some very uptight and homophobic people feel that the weeks events were filled with many lesbian events - a very misleading thought considering the small number of lesbian only events during the week. I think it would be really great if there were more lesbian events held during the week - maybe even more events where straight wymyn could speak with lesbian women to grow and share together. I think that next year the consideration of where the "L" appears should be well-thought out. It would be a shame for a misleading "L" in the legend to jeopardize your funding. Thanks for your time. Enjoy!

OMISSIONS?

The events described in your brochure were neither culturally uplifting nor were they a real help to finding work for the underprivileged women in our society. I feel strongly that this is a good beginning, but in trying to be very "avant garde" you seem to have omitted even the simplest form of prayer at any level.

It occurs to me that certain elements were completely omitted. For example, there is no mention of any group which faintly resembles normal family life, ie. Girl Guides, Daughters of Isabella, Catholic Women's League, Little Sisters of the Poor, CND Congregation, Les Guides Catholiques, Brownie Leaders, to name a few organizations which were not invited to participate in this week. I presume it is because you do not have the necessary addresses. Please call me.

D. Flannery

(from IWW: We appreciate these and any other suggestions for participating groups. However, we would like to mention that at least some of these groups were approached by IWW this year and, although interested, did not have the time or energy to participate this year. We will continue to seek out women's groups in the community who support the goals of IWW and wish to be part of it.)

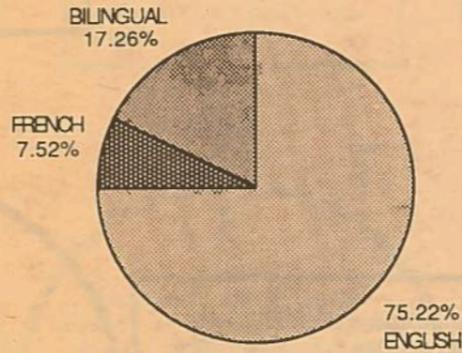


Photo by Lynn Andrews

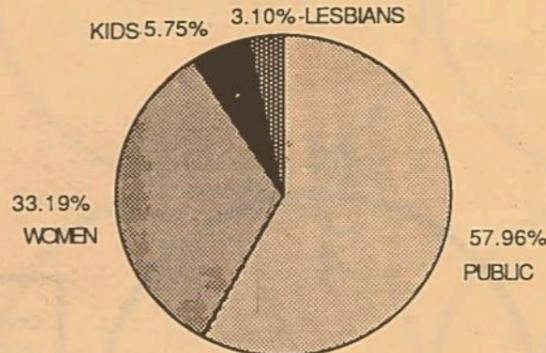
International Women's Week 1987 came with a great deal of false advertising. But the week has a huge success and we have many women to thank for profiling the work they do all year around. Below is an overview of the week done by an Independent evaluator, Joan Holmes Consulting which

gives a more reliable picture of the week's activities. In response to the slanderous attacks by the media and specifically, The Ottawa Citizen, IWW has filed complaints with the Ontario and Quebec Press Council. We also sent a letter to the editor of the Citizen which is reproduced below.

LANGUAGE OF EVENTS

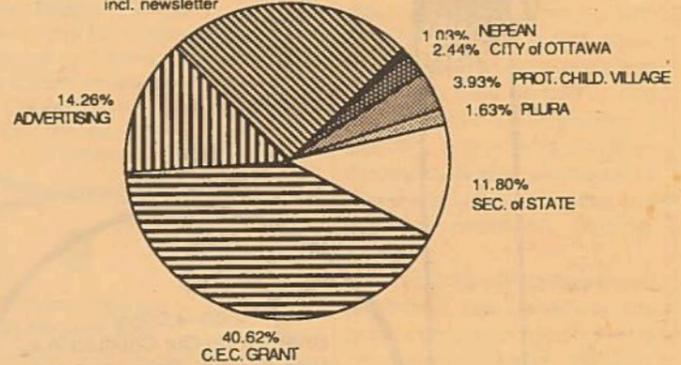


IWW EVENTS FOR



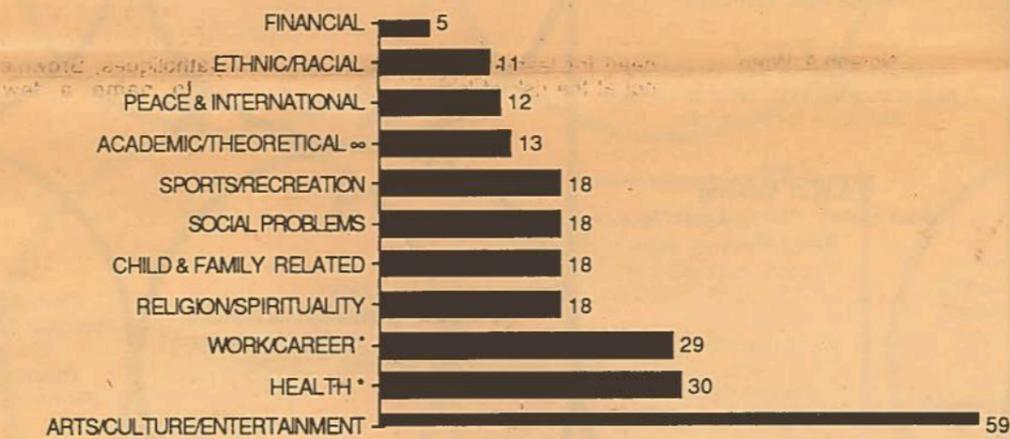
FUNDRAISING 24.29% incl. newsletter

REVENUE



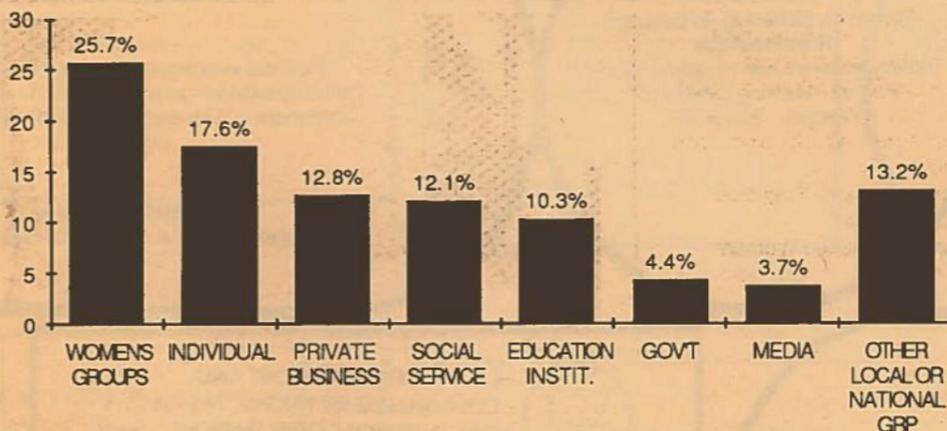
IWW 1987 in review

NUMBER OF EVENTS BY TOPIC



* includes physical, mental, emotional, sexual and reproductive
 o includes homemaking
 π includes putting theory into practice

SPONSORSHIP OF IWW EVENTS



In response to the hostile and prejudiced coverage we got in the Ottawa Citizen throughout IWW we wrote a letter to the editor. Two months after the event, the letter still has not appeared in the paper.

Letter to the Editor
 The Citizen
 Ottawa

To the Editor:

Women's organizations have traditionally been victims of two injustices in the media: underrepresentation and misrepresentation. The article "Pro-abortion group set to get federal grant for Ottawa event" in the Citizen's February 24, early edition is an example of the latter. All told, there were nine inaccuracies in the article. These fall into the three categories: error, misquote, and misrepresentation.

1) The title declares that the International Women's Week Committee (IWW) is a "Pro-Abortion Group." IWW is not a "Pro-abortion" organization. Our mandate is to promote work done for and by women in the Ottawa-Carleton region. We firmly advocate a woman's right to choice in all areas of her life, and through publicity, we assist groups to enable women to have the resources and information available to make informed life choices.

2) The phrase "women's event which promotes a pro-abortion platform" does not describe IWW. The issue of abortion is not a part of IWW's platform. Again, we exist to give public profile to women's work, women's voices and women's needs. IWW coordinated 210 events. Less than three per cent of our programme was open to lesbians only, and a mere one per cent dealt with the issue of choice in abortion. By excluding 96 per cent of the programme, you have done a disservice to the work of the other 197 groups that participated in the week. Are they not newsworthy?

3) "lesbian related seminars receive funding" is a gross error. IWW does not fund any workshops or organizations. Specifically, the Secretary of State money did not fund lesbian workshops, or any other workshops during the week. Secretary of State funds represents one-tenth of our budget: this money goes to publicity (excluding the calendar of events) and logistical costs.

The media has a responsibility to present the public with the facts. Slanted reporting, such as this article, promotes misunderstanding, hatred and fear of women's community groups. We have felt the repercussions of the nation-wide coverage that has resulted from the initial article. Much of the succeeding printed media reports used the Citizen's article as a basis: misrepresentation of our organization escalated to a national scale and even arose in the House of Commons. Women's organization's funding is never secure. This very real threat is perpetuated when the media misrepresents IWW's work as being anti-family, pro-abortion, and lesbian exclusive.

As a committee, we were heartened that other media portrayed our work in a realistic and accurate way. We have great respect for Le Droit, the Sunday Herald, and the electronic media who withstood the temptation to create a hyped up story where none existed.

Despite the "bad press", we were delighted by the wide support we received from the community, and the success of the week as demonstrated by the fifteen thousand people who participated.

The Ottawa International Women's Week Committee

May 1987 mai

Does your organization need publicity? Come on "For Women", a Cable-TV show, Monday, 6:30-7:00 Cablevision. Ann Beauquest 235-34

Bulletin Femmes

Women's News

S 3

2:00 -4:00pm
Bringing Up Our Children In a New Culture Babysitting and interpretation available
 Call ahead. Multicultural Women's Association, 238-4256

2:00pm
Focus on Black Women, AGM
 Election of executive. Jack Purcell, Winnie Coddett, 560-7732

6:00-9:00pm
Women's Singing Workshop
 Anyone who wants to become part of a women's singing group is invited. Laura Dolinger and Jane Keeler, Rm. 329, St. Pats. Bldg. Carleton Univ.

7:00pm
Film Benefit: Turtle Diary
 Centretown Parents Day Care, Towne Cinema, \$5 at door, \$4 in advance, 234-7473.

M 4

Lesbian Information Line
 Meeting of those interested in organizing the line. Call IWW, 233-2691 for more info.

Congratulations to OCLISS who recently won the F. R. Scott Award for their continued work with and for low-income people. The annual award is given by the Association of Legal Clinics of Ontario.

W 6

7:30pm
Mothers Are Valued
 Get together for membership. Women's Place, 242 Besserer. Call 722-785

S 10

6:00 pm
Mother's Day Peace Vigil
 For more info call 230-4590

7:30 pm
Support Group for women who have miscarried. First meeting to organize group. Women's Place. Delores 234-3598

M 11

noon-2pm
International Women's Year: 20 Yrs Down the Road
 Hon. Florence Bird will speak. Bring your lunch. Council of Women, Maria Neil, 233-6429

7 pm
Lesbian Daughters of Alcoholics
 A new group forming. Women's Place, 230-8504 for more info.

7 pm
D.A.W.N. Meeting
 Jack Pucell. Yasmin Laroche, 990-4880.

T 12

7:00 pm
Off the Pedestal
 Eating Disorders. CKCU FM 93.1

W 13

9:30-3:30 pm
Anglican Church Women's
 There is International Year for the Homeless. St. George's Church, 930 Watson, off Cook, 741-4

S 24

2-4 pm
Parenting and Discipline : How to deal with our Children.
 18 Louisa St. Multicultural Women's Assoc. 238-4256

M 25

7:30-9:30 pm
Forum on Battering in Lesbian Relationships
 Batters asked not to attend. Jack Purcell. Healing Centre for Women, 235-8062

T 19

18h00
Un cours d'orientation de carrière
 562 Somerset W. Orientation au travail pour femmes, 232-4274

W 20

7:00 pm
Planned Parenthood
 Speaker Maureen Orton. Education - Promoting Responsibility" RA C. Riverside Dr. Planned Parenthood 230-7797

S 31

12-5 pm
Girls and Women Fitness and Sport Festival
 Ottawa Civic Centre, Salon A, B & C. Free. Women and Sport, Susan Palmer, 722-8438

2-4 pm
Social Event: Come and Have Fun
 18 Louisa St. Multicultural Women's Assoc. 238-4256



S.A.S.C. OFFERS SUPPORT AND COUNSELLING (BY PHONE, 24 HOURS A DAY, IN PERSON, OR IN SUPPORT GROUPS) FOR SURVIVORS OF INCEST, RAPE, BATTERING AND/OR SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The Sexual Assault Support Centre CRISIS: 234-2266 OFFICE: 725-2160



Mediawatch The national women's organization dedicated to improving the portrayal of women and girls in the media now has an Ottawa office. Information on video screenings, speakers and positive complaining. Joan 235-0472 or Eleanor 563-0653.

F
1

4:00-9:00pm
Celebrate May Day
Canned Food Drive for the Ottawa Food Bank. Bring canned goods to the Ottawa and District Labour Council. Refreshments served.
288 Dalhousie Street 237-1590

S
2

11:00am
Walk Around the World for Peace Get sponsors or walk 10 km fund-raiser. Ottawa Disarmament Coalition, 231-7786

8:30pm
Give Peace a Dance
Music by the Randyeters
Glebe Community Centre, 690 Lyon, Ottawa Disarmament Coalition and the Ottawa & District Labour Council, \$2, free for walkers

Sistren June 3

Jamaican women's theatre collective comes to Ottawa

In 1977, thirteen working class women in Jamaica came together to make a play about "How we suffer as women and how men treat us bad". The play signalled the beginning of *Sistren*, a women's popular theatre collective whose plays depict the socio-economic and political problems facing women.

Working with professional personnel, the collective has produced plays dealing with teen pregnancy, rape, violence, male attitudes, the International Monetary Fund, government policies, class conflict and poverty. The plays are powerful tools for raising consciousness, based on the personal experiences of the actresses and other women.

The themes of the plays are starkly and clearly portrayed in ink by *Sistren's* textile team.

Sistren uses popular theatre techniques in the community to raise women's awareness of the forces which oppress them. *Sistren* assists the women in organizing to change their situation.

In one rural community, *Sistren* worked with the women to organize around the urgent need for a reliable water source. In a Kingston ghetto, *Sistren* helped women to begin income generating projects.

We in the Ottawa community will have the opportunity to watch the *Sistren* performance "Muffet Inna All A We" on Wednesday, June 3, at Alumni Auditorium, Unicentre, University of Ottawa, 85 Hasteley. Tickets are \$10 general admission and \$7 for unemployed/students/seniors.

For tickets and more information, contact Jean at World Interaction, 78 Daly, 238-4659.



Th

7

7:00pm
Film Benefit: The Official Story
Towne Cinema, \$10 supporter, \$5/\$4, World Interaction Mondiale, Jean Fairholm, 238-4659

7:30pm
Film Night on Childbirth
D.Roy Kennedy Public School, 919 Woodroffe, Library, Donations \$3, Childbirth Education Association, Stephanie Irwin, 238-2061

8

12:00 noon
24 Hour Vigil Against Capital Punishment Parliament Hill, Peace Flame, Ottawa Coalition Against the Return of the Death Penalty, Pat File or Paul Larose Edwards, 563-1891

May 8 - 10
Time of Daring: Latin American Film Festival. OPIRG Ottawa, See ad for more info. Christina 564-5699

May 8 - 11
National Action Committee on the Status of Women AGM
Carleton University, for more info call Claire, 234-7062

9

9:00 am - 3:00 pm
Rummage Sale
135 McLeod, Women Making Scenes, Louise Gallant, 563-0633 (May 10 rain date)

2 pm
Poetry Reading by Christine Donald of "The Fat Women Measures Up"
Women's Place
Donations. Childcare.
238-2882

New Women in Sobriety. Self-help support group of women-identified women who are recovering addicts. Every Thursday, 7:30 to 9:30. Every Sunday, 10 am to noon. 563 Somerset St. W. Mary Di Salvo, 232-7325.

Gloucester Services for Abused Women is presently recruiting volunteers for their program. Diane, 741-6025.

14

7:30
Comité francophone de la S.I.F.
Bienvenue à toute les femmes francophones. Jack Purcell, Evelyne, 238-1583, 233-2691

7-9 pm
Services Provided by the Health Dept.
Babysitting and interpretation
Call ahead 238-4256
Multicultural Women's Assoc.

21

7:30
Empathy House AGM
For more info. call Carolyn Combs, 560-4293

Rural Experience Cottages available for 1 week for low income families of Ottawa-Carleton, June - September. OCLISS, 232-2677

Operation Break Rural centre owned and operated by poor people, to be used by low-income families. Group picnics every Sat. starting May 16 - provide own food and transportation. 232-2677

Childcare Providers workshops on 1) Contracting and communicating with parents, 2) Record-keeping, 3) Starting out. Various locations in April and May. Lee Dunster, 738-3322

Women's World, Nepean Parks and Recreation, presents a bus tour to the Toronto area, June 1-3, 1987. Includes Cullen Garden, McMichael Gallery, lunches, evening theatre and much more. 226-6554.

The Well in need of food donations due to extreme shortages at Food Bank.

23

9 am-1pm
Giant Rummage Sale
Parking Lot of 18 Louisa St. Dalhousie Parent Day Care Centre
Donations accepted ahead of time
234-2580

8:00
Women's Place 1st Anniversary Dance
Jack Purcell Community Centre.
Tickets at door and Ottawa Women's Bookstore

30

9 am
Organized Working Women Annual General Meeting 200 Isabella St. Deborah 236-7238
May 30-31

City Softball Leagues for Girls and Women 564-1096
Girls: 13-17, May 11- June 26, \$10 for new players (includes T-shirt), \$5 for returning
Women: 18 and up, May 18 - August 14, \$20 new players, \$15 returning

348 Bronson Avenue
Ottawa, Ontario
K1R 6J3

(613) 237-0212

Evelyn Gigantes

MPP Ottawa Centre
Député provincial Ottawa-Centre

Knotty Women Woodworking

Custom woodworking
Menuiserie d'art sur commande
613-236-1204



Women's Place
Place aux femmes

242 Besserer Street
238-2882

Information
Ressources
Centre de rencontre

Information
Ressources
Drop in space

Profile of Women's Groups

Each month we will profile one or two groups who are doing work for and with women in the Ottawa area. If you would like your group profiled, submit a description of your group and activities to IWW.

Women Making Scenes : Ottawa's new women's video collective

by Sherry Galey

The unrealistic and stereotyped portrayal of women in the broadcast media has long been a serious concern of women. Most of us have a hard time identifying with the images and lifestyles of women we see on television. Studies have confirmed our experience that T.V. programming distorts women's realities, objectifies our bodies, ignores our distinctive perspectives, misrepresents our views and trivializes our work. This has also been the fate of minority, racial and ethnic groups as well as the poor, the disabled and the elderly.

With its tremendous influence in shaping ideas, attitudes and behaviour, especially those of impressionable children, there can be no doubt that T.V. reinforces the all-too-prevalent sexism, hetero-sexism, racism, ethno-centrism, ageism and class privilege of today's society.

One important way women can change this state of affairs is by pressuring the broadcasters, the advertisers, the government and the regulatory bodies to modify the policies and practices governing the media's portrayal of women and other oppressed groups.

Another way is to literally take matters into our own hands, pick up the video equipment and create our own alternatives. If the mainstream media does not cover the issues that concern us or accurately

depict the way we live, then let's do it ourselves. The truth as we see it may not make it on network T.V. tomorrow night, but we can share it with each other, and we have to start somewhere.

It was this sentiment that led to the formation in October 1986 of Women Making Scenes, Ottawa's first and only women's video collective.

Although group members plan to use video for differing purposes, we share an excitement about video's potential as a tool for self-expression, for the documentation of struggles for social change and for consciousness-raising.

Ultimately the group hopes to act as a resource facility for Ottawa women and women's groups, offering video training, consulting and production services. We want to help women's groups discover how they can use video to increase the effectiveness of the promotion, education and documentation projects.

For example, speakers, workshops and events can be taped so that women who couldn't attend can still benefit. Short videos can be an excellent way to inform others about the work of an organization. Video crews present at demonstrations can often protect participants from harassment. And using video can open communications channels to less literate populations.

At the moment, Women Making Scenes is busy running introductory training programs for group members in video production. Our first step is to demystify the technology for ourselves. Our experience has been that the apprehension many of us feel about working with technology is quickly dispelled in a supportive women-only environment.

The other major focus of Women Making Scenes is making the vast wealth of video work by women in Canada and around the world accessible to women in this region. During International Women's Week, we received a very positive response to the video evening we co-sponsored with MATCH. We showed "Wallflower Order", an exciting piece documenting the work of a feminist dance theatre collective and "Sweet Sugar Rage", which showed how a Jamaican women's collective uses popular theatre to organize women and break down barriers between groups.

Names are now being put on the waiting list for the next training session. Please call Sherry G. 238-1312 or Deb C. 234-7693 if you want to know more about video training or Women Making Scenes.

Mothers are Women

by Maureen Kellerman

Confined to the home, mother work and house work are largely invisible. The work of women in the home is not included in the GNP. Statistics Canada doesn't even have a category designating full-time homemaking in one's own home as an occupation. Mothers themselves often have difficulty answering the question, "What do you do all day?" So often the day disappears in a blur of small tasks and unrecognized accomplishments. What bothers many women the most, however, is the isolation, the lack of adult company throughout most of the day.

Mothers Are Women (MAW), an organization supporting women at home was formed to meet some of these needs and concerns.

MAW began in September 1984 as a special project of the Parent Preschool Resource Centre with funding from Secretary of State, Women's Program. During the first year, five on-going discussion groups were set up in various (mostly suburban) neighbourhoods. In addition, workshops on topics ranging from Anger and Guilt to Taxation and Pensions were held at the P.P.R.C.

During its second year, MAW evolved into an independent, volunteer run organization with approximately 200 members. Regular workshops continued and a quarterly publication, *Home-base*, was established as a forum for women at home. Regular columns include: a profile of a mother at home, book reviews, a health column, articles on political and social issues affecting women at home, community resources and events, profiles of women's organizations, and letters from readers.

MAW works to support women at home at both the personal and political levels. Monthly discussion groups and workshops provide a forum for exchanging insights and experiences, helping to lessen the isolation felt by many women. Workshops and articles in *Homebase* focusing on social and economic topics make

women more aware of some of the issues affecting them.

Topics discussed have included: pensions for homemakers, financial planning, the child benefit system, the new federal divorce act, the parliamentary special committee reviewing child care, feminism and women at home, resources for women in crisis, first hand accounts of being an immigrant woman at home and of being a mother on welfare, career/life planning and maintaining employability for women at home, and ways of finding "time out" and building support systems.

To further our objective of publicly voicing the concerns of women at home, Mothers Are Women recently established a research and lobbying sub-committee. We have developed a policy on child care, calling on the government to implement a comprehensive child care system which would provide good quality, affordable daycare to families who require it and equivalent benefits to parents who choose to care for their own children at home.

In the future, we expect to develop recommendations on such topics as parental leave, homemakers pension and the child benefit system. Any policy recommendations MAW developed would involve improving the ability of parents to care for their children at home without experiencing undue social and economic penalties. Our organization would not consider it appropriate to make policies on such issues as abortion, sexual orientation, prostitution and pornography.

As one of a very few organizations representing homemakers, MAW is particularly interested in bringing the concerns of women at home to the attention of other women's organizations. Many homemakers have felt left out or left behind by the women's movement.

Through participation in events such as International Women's Week, and the sponsorship of workshops and talks by well-known feminists, MAW hopes to make the women's movement more sensitive to, and inclusive of women at home. MAW recently joined the National Action Committee on the Status of Women to further this objective.

At the same time, we hope to make women at home more aware of the ways in which feminist organizations have worked in the interests of mothers and homemakers.

The Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAW)

Promoting feminist research through a membership newsletter and networking, a data bank of researchers, conferences, awards, publications on status of women issues, including reproductive technologies, the pro-family movement, sex-role learning and more. Call for membership information or a publications list.

L'Institut canadien de recherches sur les femmes (ICREF)

Encourage la recherche féministe par un bulletin pour membres, une banque de données de c.v. de chercheuses, des colloques, et des publications sur la condition des femmes. Celles-ci comprennent l'histoire du mouvement des femmes, un bilan et des perspectives de recherches féministes, le mouvement pro-famille, et plus. Pour devenir membre ou pour tout autre renseignement, veuillez téléphoner ou écrire à:

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Women Burnout !

by Sally Gose

It is not only women working politically who burnout. Nor is it only women who work outside the home. The potential for burnout is high for all of us. This became evident at the workshop on Burnout during IWW.

As the women's experiences of burnout unfolded, it became clear that, to varying degrees, we all lived in a state of burnout. The fifteen workshop participants came from many situations and lifestyles: we were in the paid workforce, working at home, artists, mothers and students. We were women with access to money and women who were poor. Our burnout had been medicalized and psychologized under every term imaginable.

It was an emotion filled discussion - burnout was an issue that touched us all. These women who had reached a severe state of burnout expressed what a frightening and isolating experience it can be.

We spent a large part of the evening on strategizing ways to help ourselves. The discussion covered such things as learning to recognize and respect "warning signals", do nice things for yourself, express anger and frustration, delegate, not feel guilty, and stop denying the fact that you are burnt out. We acknowledged that the difficulty was not in recognizing what we "should do", but in putting it into practice. We all found it really hard to put our own needs first.

The evening concluded with the development of a "Life Without Burnout Bill of Rights". We agreed that strategies for coping with burnout were strategies for self-empowerment. This list of rights became quite extensive over a very short period of time. We all exuberantly contributed to reaffirm our rights: to say "no", to be in control of our own lives, to have a bad day, to not apologize, to be selfish, to do nothing, to make mistakes, to enjoy successes, to change our minds... the list went on.

The lives of most women lead to burnout. The demands placed on women are high - the double workload inside and outside the home, the "emotional work" expected of women, mothering, etc. The high risk of physical, emotional and financial abuse are also critical factors that lead to burnout.

The workshop ended with the women realizing the need for an ongoing support group. Several women exchanged phone numbers. Perhaps this will be the beginning of a much needed support group for women experiencing burnout.

For more information on burnout, contact Sally Gose at 232-5280.

Kid's Column



by Donna Munro

"Play it again, Patricia!" echoed through the halls as I approached the room at Jack Purcell where the mums and kids dance was being held. This was the workshop that brazenly advertised, "fun guaranteed". Energy was high and it certainly did look like everyone was having fun. Well, almost everyone. One young girl was sobbing in her mother's lap after being eliminated from the finals of musical chairs, but even she had to pause and peek out occasionally to glimpse the wild happenings...thirty-five kids and adults jiving and twisting, doing the limbo and monster mash, not to mention walking like Egyptians! And the vigour that went into the "stamp out sexism" balloon

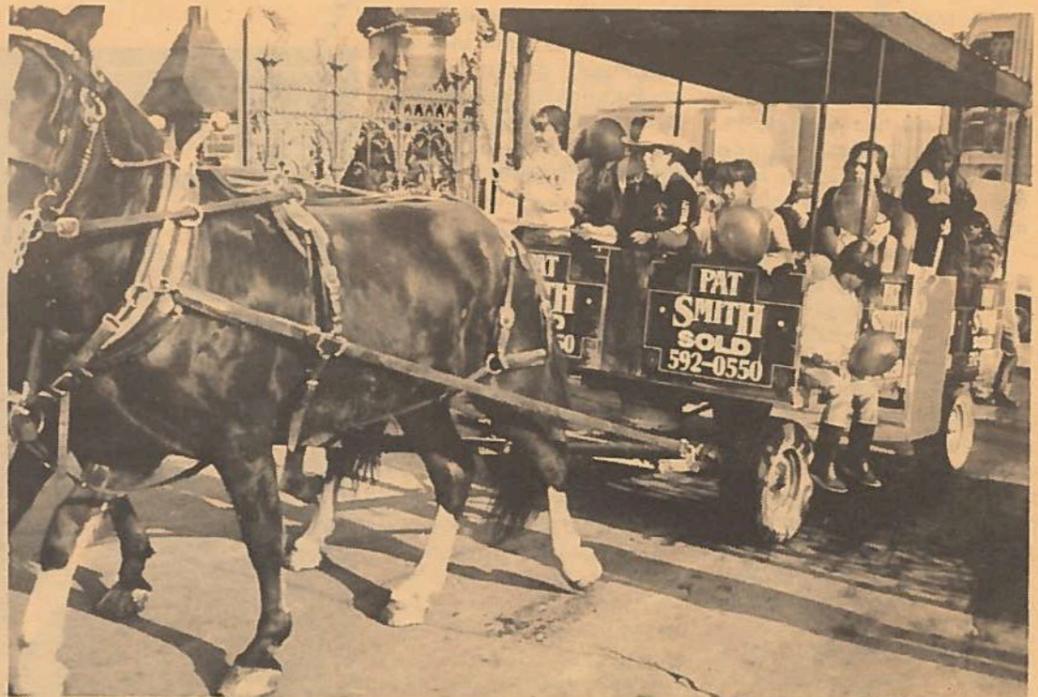


Photo by Gilles Benoit

game was uplifting indeed.

On a different note... songs about camels, hippos, ants, worms, bellybuttons and of course ducks, dominated the sing-a-long workshop with the Quackers. The atmosphere was generally one of silliness, ending with a rousing rendition of "Be kind to your web-footed friends", though I'm sure that everyone was moved as we all formed a circle, big ones and little ones together, swaying as we sang the words of Raffi's song, "one light, one sun, one sun warming everyone".

I was really pleased that Kids on the Block were able to do a show during the week. With all the media-generated hype over the lesbian workshops and the homophobia that that

released, it was reassuring to see a program for kids that looks at differences in a very positive way. Disabled puppets openly and proudly discuss the ways in which they are different from other kids. The theme song, "Kids are different" ends with the lines, "If you look inside you'll see that tall kid, that small kid, that blind kid, that deaf kid- is just like you and me!".

The increased participation of kids in this year's I.W.W. was exciting. I was amazed at how many kids came to the Celebration Dance and rally. The self defence classes and film night filled up early and even with the snowstorm almost 60 kids were dropped off at the childcare room at the

Fair.

I'm looking forward to even more events for and with kids next year.

Many thanks to the Preschool Store for generously donating a quadro climber system for our use in the childcare room and to James St. Parents Coop for use of their space in the evenings. And of course, special thanks to the many individuals and groups that volunteered their skills and energy in leading workshops or providing childcare during the week.

In next month's column I'll be looking at the Kids on the Block program in greater detail.

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ART COLUMN
by Donna Quince

A variety of artistic forms of expression by women have been on display in Ottawa over the past few months. For women, art has always, in part, been political. These events by women artists have had some very strong political statements.

In mid February at Gallery 101, Susan Geraldine Taylor and Carol Bretzloff opened shows entitled "This Moment is an Eternity" and "The Peace Garden", respectively. In Taylor's exhibit, her bedroom had been designed into the confines of the gallery space to represent the overlap between some women artists' home life and their artistic endeavors. Taylor's work proves that being an artist is quite often a total way of life.

Carol Bretzloff's "Peace Garden" is the stronger of the two shows. Using skulls, rocks, branches, feathers and other 'natural' objects, Bretzloff creates sculptures which are very primitive in their nature, yet are a projection of the future, as opposed to the past. Bretzloff warns of nuclear trouble and we can only imagine a return to using objects left after a nuclear holocaust.

Ottawa City Hall was host to the International Women's Week Art Show, curated by House Works gallery cafe, (a women's art gallery). "Celebrating Our Diversity", the show's theme, drew on the works of eleven women artists. The exhibit had a strong cultural diversity, with artists from such cultural backgrounds as Haitian, Japanese, Jamaican, Chinese, South American, as well as native, anglophone and francophone.

The mediums were also varied: the soft water colours of Mary Anne Caiboisai, the vibrant colours in Joan Jee's oil paintings, the gentle hues of Mitzi Bidner's soft sculptures, the striking black & white of Tomoko Kodama's Oriental brush paintings, the beautiful non-silver photographs of Donna Ward, the colourful afro-jamaican fabrics by Winsom, the politically strong arpilleras by the Manuela Ramos Movement, the thematic style of Martha Ottolenghi, the original multi-media shields by C.J. Fleury, the women-positive, voodoo-influenced paintings of Barbara Stephenson, and the controversial colourful work of Christine Major.

The show as a whole was more than a group of women from a "sewing circle" (Nancy Baele, Ottawa Citizen).

The University of Ottawa's Visual Arts Gallery 115 hosted an exhibition by women students for International Women's Week. The show provided a large number of artists in the visual arts

program with a venue for their work. Artists work included paintings, photo-graphy, sculpture and multi-media. Curated by student Donna Ward, the exhibit proved that women (who make up 85% of the visual arts enrolment) have some strong impressions and expressions, be they political or not.

Lillian Allen, that rockin' dub poet, played to a packed Porter Hall on March 20th as part of International Women's Week. Playing from her excellent LP "Revolutionary Tea Party", Allen began the show by getting everyone out of their seats and dancing to her strong political messages. Opening the show was Ahdri Zhina Mandiel, whose own brand of poetry was not well suited to Porter Hall. However, the audience was receptive and to some extent, involved in Mandiel's work.

Watch for the House Works exhibition in the Ottawa Women's Bookstore June 5th to 30th. The show features works by local artist Barbara Stephenson. Stephenson draws from a rich haitian cultural heritage to create new images of womanhood.

Coming soon....Summer Solstice Mad Hatter Tea Party! Details in the June issue.

Watch this column for further upcoming events at Gallery 115, House Works, etc. SUPPORT WOMEN'S ART!



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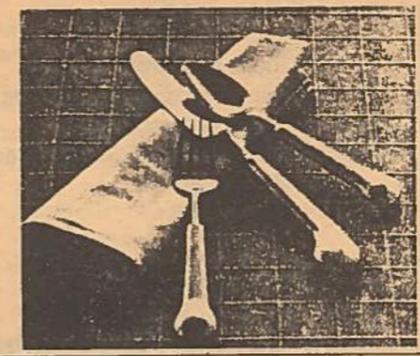
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Women and Disability



In future issues, this will be a regular column which DAWN Ottawa has kindly agreed to write. For this first issue, some basic facts on life for disabled women from DAWN Ottawa's first newsletter (DAWN NEWS, March 1987).

- 18% of all women are disabled
- disabled girls are twice as likely to be sexually assaulted
- disabled women are more likely to be victims of violence
- support services for disabled mothers are almost totally inaccessible

- most women's services are totally inaccessible to all types of disabled women
- the unemployment rate for disabled women is 74%
- poverty is an inescapable reality for most working disabled women, who earn 64% of the average working woman's salary which itself equals 60% of a man's wages
- when married men become disabled, 50% of their marriages break up; for disabled women the figures are 99%



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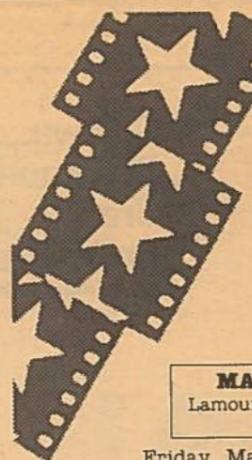
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