



NAC Housing Newsletter



National Women and Housing Conference

Les Enfants, Ces Indesirables!

Native Housing

Sexual Harassment at Home

*Ontario Women's Housing Program
and more!...*

Volume 2 no.4, Fall 1989

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URGENT CALL FOR COPY

Please contact us with news from your region....

This newsletter requires input from all corners of the country in order for it to reflect the national reality.

We need your ideas and input...

If you would care to write an article please mail or FAX it to us anytime. Don't forget, a primary intention of this newsletter is to spread the news nationwide so do send us articles and upcoming events listed in your local housing publication and we'll be happy to re-print them. Contact:

NAC Housing Committee
720 Spadina Ave. Suite 410
Toronto, Ontario
M5S 2T9
(416) 926-9822
FAX # 920 5855



cl echenberg

The Networking Continues ...

The Housing Workshop on May 13 at the 1989 NAC Annual General Meeting served as a meaningful forum for 21 women from across the country to establish a concrete link with one another, to share resources, and to devise a national plan of action. The participants included housing providers and researchers as well as representatives from anti-poverty groups, church groups, and other community based feminist resource groups. Special thanks to Havi Echenberg from the National Anti Poverty Organization for facilitating the event.

We identified a myriad of issues of concern to us as women, such as :

- * the growing awareness of sexual harassment and discrimination in housing,
- * the lack of affordable housing in certain municipalities,
- * the need to develop leadership and professional skills in our communities, and
- * the desire to further develop a feminist analysis of housing issues.

After a discussion about the continued use of this newsletter as a networking tool, the group unanimously agreed that the need to build a national coalition is of paramount importance in order to develop a movement. And so, the idea for a National Women and Housing Conference was conceived.

The NAC Housing Committee was called upon to start the ball rolling. Guelph, Ontario was suggested as a good location where there were women willing to help with organizing. Ofcourse, the first step will be securing funding, and we do have a few ideas for sources. But - we need your help. Any suggestions, comments, volunteer time, funding ideas, and /or other support you can provide is what will make this event happen. You know where you can contact us.

Marnie Hayes, Co-Chair
NAC Housing Committee

Open house

The Toronto members of the NAC Housing Committee are pleased to announce that we will be hosting a special orientation meeting for new members in the new year. All interested women are invited to attend.

The event will take place on Monday January 22, 1990 at 7:30 P.M. at Metro Tenants Legal Services, 720 Spadina Ave., Suite 410, Toronto. Call 926-9822 for more information.

We invite our readership across the country to host similar events in your own communities. Please keep us informed as to new members so we can include them on our mailing list.

CALL FOR PAPERS WOMEN AND HOUSING

CANADIAN WOMAN STUDIES/LES CAHIERS DE LA FEMME invites contributions to a special issue on WOMEN AND HOUSING, to be published in the summer of 1990.

Topics for consideration include:

- *housing rights; discrimination, including sexual harassment
- *the causes of homelessness
- *housing policies and programs that affect women
- *housing location, space and family form
- *Native women and housing
- women's involvement in planning, design, development and construction
- *housing as a community development tool
- *women's initiatives in housing; strategies and networks

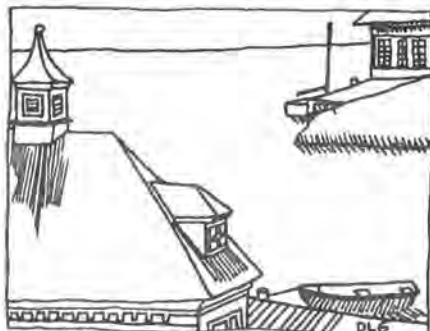
Other suggestions are also welcome. We consider papers in either English or French. Our criteria for accepting material are clarity, relevance and interest to the lives of our diverse readership. We are actively soliciting manuscripts that deal with issues pertaining to the lives of women of colour, immigrant women, working class women, lesbians, disabled women, elderly women and other marginalized women.

Articles should be typed and double spaced, 7-12 pages long (1500-2500 words), with notes following the article; please send two copies of your manuscript, along with a brief biographical note and an abstract. Articles are published in their original language and may be accompanied by summaries in translation. We give preference to previously unpublished material. If possible, please submit photographs and/or graphics to illustrate your work. Ask us for a style sheet.

DEADLINE: December 10, 1989.

Please write to us as soon as possible indicating your intention to submit an article.

Canadian Women Studies
212 Founders College, York University
4700 Keele Street
Downsview, Ontario M3J 1P3
(416) 736-5356



Les Enfants, Ces Indesirables!

A Information-ressources Femmes et logement, organisme provincial d'information et de sensibilisation sur le dossier des **femmes et du logement**, nous vous sommes activement impliquées, au cours des dernières années, dans le dossier de la **discrimination** dans le domaine du logement. En effet, une enquête réalisée à Montréal, démontrait que le refus de louer à cause des enfants est le motif le plus souvent invoqué par les propriétaires et que les femmes cheffes de famille monoparentale sont les principales cibles de cette discrimination. Or, la pauvreté d'un grand nombre d'entre elles limite considérablement leurs possibilités d'accès à des logements décentes. La discrimination qu'elles subissent amplifie donc une situation déjà très critique. Les familles pauvres et monoparentales, lorsque touchées par ce phénomène, ont toutes les "chances" de se retrouver dans des logements de piètre qualité et beaucoup trop chers pour leurs moyens.

Dès le début de son existence, Information-ressources Femmes et logement a rapidement constaté que les plaintes relatives à la discrimination basée sur la présence d'enfants, (discrimination explicitement condamnée à l'article 1665 du code civil québécois, Loi 107) se retrouvaient dans un vide juridique total. D'une part, parce que le substitut de procureur général qui devait normalement s'occuper de ces plaintes, ne le faisait pas. D'autre part, parce que le motif "avoir des enfants" n'apparaissant pas dans la Charte québécoise des droits de la personne, la Commission des droits de la personne du Québec, ne pouvait intervenir.

Des pressions persistantes de notre part auprès des intervenants politiques, un étroit suivi du dossier ainsi que des appuis de groupes de femmes ont abouti en juin 1988, à une décision de la part de la Commission des droits de la personne du Québec: elle acceptait de recevoir dorénavant les plaintes de cette nature et elle les traiterai comme de la discrimi-

nation basée sur l'âge. Ce motif est stipulé dans la charte québécoise des droits (article 10) alors que le motif "présence d'enfants" est absent de celle-ci.

Les femmes québécoises doivent, par conséquent, être informées de l'existence de ce recours et l'utiliser si on veut qu'il ait un effet dissuasif sur les pratiques courantes des propriétaires.

Si un recours devant les tribunaux ne règle pas totalement le problème de l'intolérance envers les enfants, les familles monoparentales et les familles non traditionnelles, il peut néanmoins permettre de limiter les dégâts.

S'inquiéter de la dénatalité au Québec et se gargariser de bons mots (et de "bonbons économiques") pour les familles est nettement insuffisant: il est inadmissible de tolérer plus longtemps la discrimination envers les enfants.

Information-ressources Femmes et logement procédera cette année à une étude sur l'application de ce recours juridique et sur son efficacité réelle pour les femmes locataires.

C'est un dossier à suivre de près.

Ruth Pilote
Pour Information-ressources
Femmes et logement
1200, rue Laurier est, Local 212
Montreal, Quebec
H2J 1G9
Tel: (514) 272-9304

N.B. Les plaintes doivent être adressées à La Commission des droits de la personne du Québec. Tel: (514) 873-5146.

Network Profile

Pam Sayne

In the Spring 1989 NAC Newsletter, the NAC Housing Committee included a questionnaire designed to elicit information from those of you who are working in the area of women and housing issues. Our goal is to create a resource directory and to develop a national network. We are including that questionnaire again for those of you who didn't get the last newsletter or no longer have it; we want you to fill out the form now, please.

The responses that we have received came from many areas in Canada - Vancouver, B.C., Richmond, B.C., Whitehorse, Yukon, Sharbot Lake, Ont., Guelph, Ont., Ottawa, Ont., Kanata Centre, Ont., Chatham, Ont., and Toronto, Ont. Clearly, we're looking for responses from many other communities as well. It was particularly encouraging to get responses from both urban and rural groups. It is worth noting that land use and housing rights are issues for women in rural areas as well as for women in our over-crowded, multi-use demand, urban areas.

The majority of our respondents to date indicated that they were prepared to talk informally to individuals or groups who are addressing women's housing needs; many also said they were willing to participate on panel discussions on housing provision based on need. This is very useful information for planning the first Women and Housing Conference. It also means that many of you are ready to exchange what you know, and that's just what we want to facilitate.

Let us know how you fit into the national resource network. Your input is needed to make women's housing issues visible.



International Women and Housing Meeting

The next national housing event is the Canadian Housing and Renewal Association meeting in Ottawa, May 13-15, 1990. The NAC Housing Committee is planning to organize a special Women and Housing meeting at about the same time with participants from the Women and Shelter Group of Habitat International Coalition. We hope that women's organizations in Canada can find the funds to send representatives. If you are interested in attending, we'd like to hear from you.

NATIVE HOUSING: Necessity for a Comprehensive Approach

By Joyce Johnson

The housing of Native people has long been the responsibility of the federal government.

Currently, two departments of the federal government are responsible for Native housing: Indian and Northern Affairs which focuses on housing for status Indians on Reserve. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation focuses on housing for Native people off Reserve, primarily in cities and rural communities. CMHC also has a supportive role to play regarding Reserve housing. That role is to provide funding for rental housing stock and repairs.

With Native people migrating to and from the Reserve, and many Native people making the cities their home, a more comprehensive approach that reflects the changing patterns of living of Native people is required.



The federal government has recently appointed a new Minister Responsible for Housing - Alan Redway. He has indicated that there is a need for fresh ideas and thought in this area but has been unable to deliver federal commitment in the form of money.

Reserve Housing

In its recently completed Evaluation Report on its On Reserve Housing Programs, CMHC indicates that if current trends in the provision of housing stock continue, the problems will persist on Reserves at least to the year 2010.

“On Reserve” problems include overcrowding, poor physical housing conditions, and the lack of basic amenities. For example, it is noted in the CMHC report that:

- * 36% of On Reserve housing units are overcrowded as opposed to 2.3% in Canada as a whole;
- * 43% of housing units are in need of major repair as opposed to 13% throughout Canada;
- * 40% do not have access to running water, indoor toilet or bathing facilities as opposed to only 1% across Canada.

From the Native Band Council's point of view, there is a lack of co-ordination of the delivery of the various programs offered by the two branches. The different reporting procedures, and the overlapping of responsibilities of each branch, have created headaches for Bands in complying with these two bureaucracies.

**BUILDING A NATIONAL WOMEN AND HOUSING
NETWORK**

FOLD HERE

A Goal of the NAC Housing Committee is to build a national network on Women and Housing. We see this Network as a vital step if we are to grow strong in our demand for secure affordable housing. Through networking we hope to identify systemic blockages to this right and share effective strategies to overcome these blockages. Towards this end we are inviting all organizations and people working in the field of women and housing to complete and return the following questionnaire. The information will hopefully be used to create a women and housing directory for your local, national, and international use.

RETURN ADDRESS:

PLACE
STAMP
HERE

C/O National Action Committee
on The Status of Women
NAC HOUSING COMMITTEE
344 BLOOR ST. WEST
Suite 505
TORONTO, ONTARIO M5S 3A7

FOLD HERE

PLEASE FILL OUT THE SURVEY BELOW. REMOVE IT FROM THE NEWSLETTER. FOLD. TAPE OR STAPLE CLOSED. PUT A STAMP ON IT AND DROP IT IN THE NEAREST MAIL BOX.

NAME:(organization/individual) _____

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE NUMBER(S): _____

(CIRCLE YOUR RESPONSES)

(1). TYPE OF SERVICE: 1) Housing, a. long term b. short term
2) Legal 3) Peer support 4) Counselling 5) Advocacy 6) Skilled Trades
7) Financial a. personal b. project 8) Research/Analysis
9) Tenant Assoc. 10) Developer 11) Planning 12) Government Program
13) Other _____

(2). COST FOR SERVICE(S): 1) Volunteer 2) Non-profit a. Sliding Scale
b. set rates 3) Profit a. sliding scale b. set rates
4) Donations accepted.

(3). TARGET POPULATION: _____

(4). The target population is reached through 1) agency referrals
a. government b. non-government 2) individual contacts/inquiries
a. government b. non-government

(5). Is the setting primarily 1) Urban or 2) Rural or 3) Both.

(6). Could you and/or your group assist other community members, agencies, individuals, or government attempts to provide support for women's housing related initiatives by:

(PLEASE CHECK YOUR RESPONSE)

____ Providing a Brochure about your housing project
____ Participate on panel discussions about providing for housing needs based on your experiences.
____ Talking informally to individuals or groups who are addressing women's housing needs.
____ Financially assisting women and housing initiatives
____ Volunteer or paid consulting: describe _____
____ Hosting a tour or visit from (Please Circle) a. local community b. out of province visitors c. international women addressing housing provisions/rights.
____ Discussing with other women organizing strategies learned.
____ Other: describe _____

(7). What particular innovative features does your housing service have that others may want to know about?

(PLEASE CHECK YOUR RESPONSE)

____ Financing schemes.
____ Sound insulation methods.
____ Allergy proofing of the environment.
____ Security: locks, design, planning, etc....
____ Childcare programming.
____ Recreational activities.
____ Community Development including (Please circle response)
 ____ neighbourhood design planning
 ____ dealing with racism
 ____ dealing with classism
 ____ dealing with ageism
 ____ dealing with sexism
 ____ dealing with neighbourhood and community economic issues
 ____ dealing with land use and housing rights
 ____ dealing with violence against women
 ____ dealing with isolation
 ____ other (describe) _____
____ Member and Community Education Models and Programs (describe) _____

(8). How does the service offered empower women???

(9). Other Comments???

Thank You!!!

Ontario Study of Sexual Harassment

By Sylvia Novac

In response to feminist advocacy groups who have flagged the issue of sexual harassment of women tenants, the Ontario Women's Directorate (OWD) has recently committed funds to investigate the problem. Last March, the OWD organized a two-day consultation with eight women experienced in one or more of the areas of violence against women, research, tenant advocacy, and legal recourse.

An impressively high degree of consensus among the women quickly resulted in a project plan that included research, community development, and law reform work to be carried out during the next two and a half years. We agreed on the need to promote widespread public education, grass-roots organizing, and some specific legislative and policy change. To convince decision-makers to act we need more information about the extent, nature, and consequences of this form of sexism in housing, as well as realistic avenues for change.

Those of you who have read earlier issues of this newsletter know that in February 1988 members of the NAC Housing Committee met with the then Ontario Minister of Housing, Chaviva Hosek, to ask for assistance in dealing

with this problem. Her response was somewhat sympathetic, but she asked us to provide "numbers" and further evidence for her to argue the need for legislative change.

The suggestion that building superintendents be licenced as a check on known perpetrators of sexual harassment met with complete resistance from her. She framed the problem as one of "bad character" on the part of certain men, something that she felt could not be legislated against. In other words, the rights of individual men cannot be constrained to guarantee the protection of women.

The OWD in June put out a call for proposals to develop and carry out the project plan as drafted during the consultation, and the contract was awarded to the research team of Sylvia Novac, Pam Sayne, and Virginia Adamson. We have begun work on the project and expect to complete our research for March 1992.

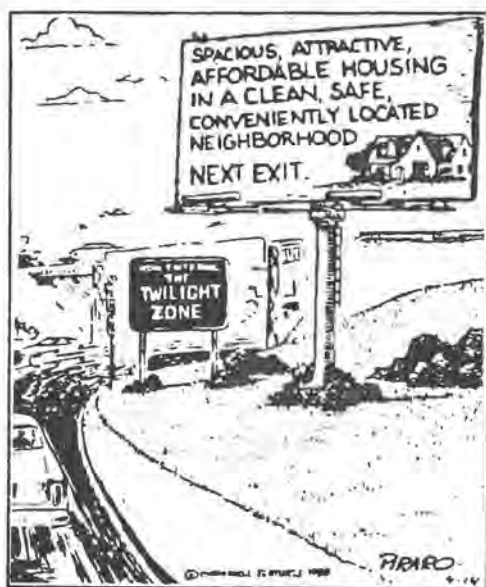
There are currently five women who have filed complaints to the Ontario Human Rights Commission, but no case has been resolved yet (the first complaint was laid almost two years



Urban and Rural Housing

In addition to the On Reserve programs, CMHC provides Native housing programs in the urban centre and rural communities. There are ongoing discussions with the Ontario government to transfer these programs to the Province. These discussions have been held without any direct input by Native groups currently providing housing for Native people in the cities or rural communities.

In many urban communities, there are long



We are pleased to include the following article that presents an overview of the issues involved in native housing (reprinted from The Housing Advocate vol. 2, Summer 1989). We plan to include articles more specific to native women's housing situation in a subsequent issue of the newsletter.

waiting lists for subsidized housing for Native people. More and more Native people are leaving the Reserves to seek employment opportunities in the urban centres. Second generation urbanized Native families are starting to look for housing in the urban centres. Currently CMHC has a total allocation of approximately 300 subsidized units for Native housing in Ontario. Although there has been an increased demand throughout the province, there has been no increase in the number of units available from CMHC in the past four years. Supply has not kept up with the demand.

Many Native non-profit housing corporations are frustrated by the reporting procedures required by CMHC. With so few units given out on an annual basis, established non-profits often add additional units on an incremental basis. For example, a housing project that added three or four units per year over the last five or six years would have to provide separate reports on each year's increment.

Consequently, it is not uncommon for one non-profit to provide three or four separate reports per year to CMHC. Their administrative costs are high in relation to the number of units being provided.

For many Native housing corporations, there is a need to increase the supply of units, to streamline the reporting procedures, and to provide more administrative dollars.

The Minister of Housing, Alan Redway, has an opportunity to listen to Native peoples on the housing issue and a responsibility to put the federal government's Native housing programs in order. The need is too great to be ignored any longer.

Joyce Johnson is the Executive Director of Anduhyaun Inc. She is currently an active member of the Metropolitan Toronto Native Housing Coalition, and is working on the development of a conference on Native Housing Issues in Ontario.

Ontario Womens Action Coalition Examines Position on Housing

On Saturday, October 28, 1989 the NAC Housing Committee conducted a workshop at the founding meeting of the Ontario Womens Action Coalition. The workshop focussed on women and housing issues in Ontario. Below is a list of the concrete demands which

emerged from the workshop. We encourage your housing group to put together a similar list of housing demands that are pertinent to your province and/or region. Please send them to us and we'll publish them in the next issue of our newsletter.

To increase women's access to social housing,

we demand renewed provincial funds for affordable, adequate, safe and accessible housing beyond the Homes Now program; we demand that the ownership of these units remain in the non-profit housing sector.

To discourage discrimination and sexual harassment of women,

we demand an amendment to the Human Rights Code that would prohibit discrimination in housing on economic grounds (based on source or amount of income); we demand that the Human Rights Commission expedite women's claims of discrimination and sexual harassment in housing.



periential analysis, and direct action) will complete the research process.

There has been increasing attention paid to the problem of sexual harassment in the context of the workplace by researchers, journalists, and by some unions. This has been fueled by a handful of precedent-setting legal cases in the U.S. and Canada. Examining sexual harassment in the housing context is not simply a parallel situation to the workplace. Sexual intrusions that occur in and around our homes threaten and violate us in unique ways.

The significance of safety in our home environment is of crucial concern to women. We have spoken of wife abuse and child sexual abuse mostly within the context of patriarchal family relationships, but less frequently made the connections to our housing forms as a parallel to that family model. What an irony that a woman who escapes such a home environment may be subjected to similar sexist abuse as part of her rental situation. We are only beginning to attend to the connections between male sexual violence and housing.

The interaction of private property relations and gender relations takes on new meanings when coercive sexual intimacy invades the privacy of women's homes, homes that are ultimately the private property of men. In what was just a footnote of an article by Catherine MacKinnon, an American feminist law professor, she says, "We need to rethink sexual dimensions of property as well as property dimensions of sexuality." That's a challenge it's time to start thinking.



WEB



Design and Illustration by Françoise Caron

ago). From tenant advocates we have learned that there has been a tendency for women to keep complaints to themselves until they are already under threat of eviction, at which point dealing with the sexual harassment in a Landlord and Tenant Court is almost impossible, and probably inappropriate.

Such cases will be followed by the researchers to document the barriers to justice faced by women. These stories, although painful, are also examples of fighting back in the face of fear, true courage. They will contribute to both a review of relevant legislation and policies, leading to practical recommendations for change, and to a greater understanding of how women cope with sexual intrusions.

Quantitative (numbers) research will involve a survey of women tenants to discover the extent and nature of this form of sexual coercion. Qualitative research in the form of case studies (in-depth stories) and participatory group work (integrating consciousness-raising, ex-

To strengthen the security of tenure for women,

we demand that the Landlord and Tenant Act be amended so that restrictive lease clauses such as "no pets" cannot be used as grounds for eviction; we demand that individuals not be evicted due to criminal acts made by other individuals in their units; we demand that the Residential Rent Regulation Act be amended so that the financial burden of unnecessary capital improvements is not passed to tenants; we demand that financial enticements to "flipping" real estate be eliminated (e.g., via speculation tax).

To reverse the history of government blindness to women's housing needs,

we demand that the Ministry of Housing provide funds for research on women's housing needs; we demand that available data be analyzed on a gender basis; we demand that women, as users of housing, must have input into the design and decision making involved in the development of housing, we demand that affirmative action be used in the housing industry to include women, particularly visible minority women, in the following areas: superintendents, financiers, security providers, construction tradespeople, designers, planners, etc.

Upcoming Global News on Women and Housing

The NAC Housing Committee is part of a global women and housing network. Through this network, we can begin to identify systematic causes of homelessness and what women are doing about it. With this objective in mind, a global publication will soon be completed with perspectives on women and housing from Africa, Asia, Latin America, Caribbean, North America, and Europe.

We will let you know how to get copies when they become available.



The Fall 1989 issue of the NAC Housing Newsletter was prepared by Sylvia Novac, Pam Sayne, Elizabeth Bateman, Leslie Robinson, Kerry McCuaig and Marnie Hayes.

Due to the usual problem of inadequate funding, we are asking those of you who can to contribute- MOOLA! Make cheques payable to NAC Housing Committee and send to: Housing Committee, NAC, #505, 344 Bloor St. W., Toronto, Ont. M5S 1W9

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____
