

Welcome!

Michelle Smith has joined the Advisory Council as our new Community Liaison/ Communications Director. Many of you will remember her as the former Coordinator of the NF and Lab. Sexual Assault Crisis & Prevention Centre. We are excited to have Michelle aboard, and welcome her contributions to the work of the Council.

Women and Decision Making

Harbour Grace women started the move . . . followed by women in Gander, Corner Brook, and Happy Valley-Goose Bay. Women's organizations coordinated events to discuss the need for increasing the numbers of women running in the upcoming municipal and school board elections. Hundreds of women have now gathered to discuss and debate the challenges to increasing our participation in Municipal Governments and School Boards.

During the process women discussed the barriers to their full participation. From women's responsibilities for home, child and elder care, to the myth of men's superior ability to lead, and yes, our own sense of self esteem when it comes to offering ourselves to leadership positions.

Following three months of coordinated events by women's equality organizations we know that there has never been a more important time for women to take their rightful place in decision making and leadership. Some women have taken the plunge and decided to run, others offered more overt support to women running. Regardless of the outcome, on September 25 women are reacting to the decided lack of our gender in positions of power. This sends a signal to provincial party leaders. You can expect to be questioned on your plans for the inclusion of women in elected/appointed positions. You can expect to be asked about your commitment to integrated social and economic policies which include the vision and values of women and communities. For women it is quite simple: we make up more than 51% of the population and decisions which affect our families, schools and communities need the guidance and leadership of women and men. It is time that balance of our genders is reflected in all decision making structures.

Partnerships to Prevent Violence: Discussion to Action

The Regional Coordinating Coalition Against Violence (Eastern Region) is holding its very first conference. All are encouraged to attend to learn and share analysis, experiences and ideas for strategies to end violence. The keynote address, "Relationship Terrorism," will be delivered by Dave Franklin, a member of the RCMP. This is open to the general public and takes place on September 19 at the Holiday Inn at 7:00 p.m.. The conference itself begins Sept. 20. Workshops include media violence, discrimination; exposing the roots of violence and violence and mental health. Panelists will also challenge participants on issues of poverty/racism/ classism. In addition there will be sessions

which focus on sharing strategies in our mutual quest toward a violence free society.

Registration for the conference is \$5 for waged. Lunch is provided and travel and accommodation subsidies are available. For more information or to register, call Donna Malone at 757-0137.

National Anthem Challenged

In February, 2001, Senator Vivienne Poy launched an inquiry in the Senate, pointing out that women (who constitute 51% of the Canadian population) were excluded from the national anthem in the lines "true patriot love in, all thy sons command." Janice Jamieson of the Burin Peninsula suggested these changes to right the exclusion and profile the important role both genders play in Canadian society:

"O'Canada our home and cherished land, true patriot love in all of us command."

Together with the Famous 5 Foundation, Senator Poy is consulting with Canadian citizens, musicians, and linguists to determine the best wording for an inclusive version of the national anthem. A petition calling for an amendment to the anthem is currently posted on Senator Poy's website <http://sen.parl.gc.ca/vpoy/> as well as the Famous 5 Foundation's website www.famous5.org You may also obtain the petition by contacting the Advisory Council.

Custody and Access

Impending changes to the Federal Divorce Legislation have women's equality groups worried. In 1998 organizations responded to the Special Joint Committee on Custody and Access with a brief outlining a myriad of concerns with any direction toward "shared parenting" in disputed custody and access arrangements. We were hoping that legislation would have been forthcoming which took into consideration the issues women had outlined. Not so . . . in May our Provincial Justice Department "weighed in" on the issue with consultations in four regions of our province. Once again women brought forward concerns: issues of power/control, abuse/violence in any move toward joint parenting, issues with mandatory mediation, lack of access to legal aid and mandatory parenting education are but a few of the concerns women's groups have outlined.

We had learned that Provincial Justice Ministers were meeting to discuss the results of the Custody and Access Consultations on September 10. An Ad Hoc Committee was quickly formed and has met with Provincial Justice Minister Kelvin Parsons asking him to bring our concerns to the Sept. Justice Ministers meeting. He agreed to do this, and has also agreed to meet with the Ad Hoc Committee upon his return.

This is a crucial issue for women's groups who work on issues of violence and equality. We have much to lose with any move the Federal Government makes toward changing the Divorce Act in response to "father's rights groups" who desire a link between access and child support payments.

Before Federal Divorce Legislation gets "fast tracked" through the House of Commons, we must insist that the Federal Justice Minister release any draft legislation to enable the women's community

to respond.

"Women, Age, Grace and Laughter"

Twelve Newfoundland and Labrador women over the age of 40 tastefully bared all for a new 2002 calendar project entitled "Women, Age, Grace and Laughter." This unique calendar project has three goals: To celebrate the life and honor the memory of Joanne Greenlee, who died of cancer in October, 1998. To raise funds to establish a Palliative Care Unit at Corner Brook's Western Regional Memorial Hospital. To celebrate, as women, our personal and group acceptance of growing old but being healthy with bodies whose changes contribute to our lives rather than detract from them.

The photographs showcase some of our Newfoundland and Labrador scenery as well as women in a unique, graceful, and fun-loving way. The West Coast launch takes place on September 15, from 2-6, at the Canada Games Centre in Corner Brook and on September 22 in St. John's, from 2-5, at the Lions Club Chalet. Calendars cost \$25 and may be ordered by contacting Tina Stewart at 634-8217 or online at www.waglcalendar.tripod.com

Sexual Violence Awareness Week September 17 - 21

Sexual Violence Awareness Week, to be proclaimed by the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women and members of the Newfoundland and Labrador Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre on September 17th, marks the beginning of a week of activities coordinated by the Centre. Actions in St. John's include a healing circle (Sept 19 at the Sexual Assault Centre) benefit show, (September 18 at Club Etomik) and the annual Take Bake the Night (TBTN) March Sept. 21 beginning at 7:30 p.m. from Bannerman Park.

TBTN marches are symbolic demonstrations organized by women for women and children to accomplish collectively what women still cannot do alone . . . walk at night through the streets of our cities and towns. Women's equality organizations coordinate these marches as symbolic demonstrations of our refusal to be silent about sexual violence, harassment, child abuse and woman battering. We also celebrate the steps we take individually and collectively to support each other and create change. Mark Friday, September 21 to march publicly insisting on our right to live without violence and without the fear of violence. Check with your local Women's Centre or Transition House for TBTN activities in your region.

Rabble-Rousing Rebel-Browsing

This site will inform you, entertain you, provoke you, and provide an opportunity to make connections to like-minded people and groups. For organizations, it will be a platform to engage the public, share ideas, and network. Join the rabble at www.rabble.ca