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What's a woman to do?

by Sheila Keats and Glenda Cabot (Co-Editors)

As women we do most of the shopping for our households. While we do our best to manage budgets in times of recession and rising costs, we are responsible for making choices that help our families, while bearing in mind that many items come to us as the result of the exploitation of women and children. Then we have the added responsibility of caring about the earth ...knowledge is power, but it sure makes shopping a daunting task these days.

For example, if we shop at Walmart we do so knowing their record on unions as well as the use of sweat shops to make 'Simply Basic' products. In these times of global recession, are we to assume that these jobs, held mostly by women, are better than no jobs at all? Are we taking away our sisters' only chances to provide for themselves and their families?

Every item we buy has a story...

What has to happen for fresh fruit to get to our tables? Should we even buy it knowing the carbon footprint left behind? Buying locally is not an option for us year round so shouldn't we be preparing for those long off seasons with fresh frozen local products? We could borrow from the lifestyle of our rural counterparts, many of whom still store, preserve, and eat local produce and meats as our ancestors did.



Don't depend on labels to help you buy sensibly. What does "Made in Canada" really mean? There are options of organic and green, but beware of 'green-washing'! You can purchase a steak, and, along with your favourite coffee, be ingesting a ton of pesticides. And, maybe instead of asking if we 'got MILK?', consumers should retort "what does MILK got IN it?"

What's a woman to do? Well, we can make simple, smart choices ... even if we start with a tomato plant on our windowsill, we have begun to make a difference to our health and our planet!





Charmaine Davidge

**Executive Director
SJSWC & WC**



STAFF PICTURE

L → R: Theresa Murphy, Nicole Kieley, Wendolyn Schlamp-Hickey, Charmaine Davidge.

DIED: Norma Scarborough was leader of the pro-choice movement in Canada and a founding member of CARAL (Canadian Abortion Rights Action League). It was while she was president that the Supreme Court of Canada declared Canada’s abortion law unconstitutional because it violated women’s guarantees to ‘life, liberty, and security of the person’ under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Executive Director’s Report

Welcome readers, to summer and our latest edition of the Spokeswoman! The past few months have been an exciting time at the St. John’s Status of Women Council and Women’s Centre.

Highlights include beginning work on the future home of Marguerite’s Place. The building currently on this site is being demolished and we are now in the process of hiring a company to construct our new building. Stay tuned for future updates!

Staff and volunteers are busy delivering programs to women and families in our community with a new pilot empowerment group being offered in Clarenville. We have many exciting activities happening over the summer, such as a fundraiser for Marguerite’s Place at Clovelly Stables, a Pride Week TGIF on July 24th as well as TGIF at the Women’s Centre for Sexual Violence Awareness Week. All these events have been well attended by enthusiastic supporters.

I would like to take a minute to thank our many donors, supporters, volunteers and staff. Without you, we would be unable to continue the great work we do and to also offer such a fabulous publication as the Spokeswoman!

Michaelle Jean Touches Hearts

by Alex Saunders, Inuit Elder

This past spring our Governor General stunned the world when, on an Arctic tour, as part of an Inuit ceremonial event, she ate a slice of raw seal heart. This sent a powerful message to our people.

When Michaelle Jean did this in ceremony, she actually called upon the powers and laws that are beyond the physical world to a spiritual law that allows healing to take place, causes miracles to happen and guides the moments of our lives.

In the Inuit culture the seal is highly prized, and great reverence was paid to it in the past ... it was the essence of life and the centre of our existence. Old Inuks always gave thanks to the Creator and paid homage to the animal that gave up its life for theirs. All organs are significant for survival but we all consider the heart to be the centre of our beings. By eating the heart of the seal, the Governor General entrenched herself in our culture and rose above the ordinary because she acknowledged our customs and traditions. It was a moving, powerful statement of respect for the Inuit.

International Women's Day Report

by Jillian Freeman

Our last issue of Spokeswoman went hot off the press and onto the tables of the annual International Women's Day Bread & Roses Brunch. This highly anticipated event took place at the Holiday Inn in St. John's on March 8, 2009. The theme for this year's brunch was, "A Century of Struggle and Triumph: Equality Once and for All."

It featured an array of information booths by local equality-seeking organizations, and a silent auction hosted by the St. John's Women's Centre. Attendees were treated to a delicious brunch catered by the hotel, and the beautiful homegrown music of Colleen Power, who also led the audience as we sang the inspirational Bread & Roses theme song.

The highlight of the IWD brunch was keynote speaker, Frances Ennis. Frances is a feminist, activist, and rug hooker extraordinaire. She spearheaded the project, *Hooking Our Lives* – a collection of rugs on exhibit at the Five Island Art Gallery, designed to honour the women of Newfoundland and Labrador. The project was dedicated to the late Sister Marie Ryan, a mentor and advocate for Frances and many other women. Frances described Marie as "an ordinary woman who did extraordinary things." Using projected images of the rugs, Frances guided the audience through a vast and complicated herstory.

Frances spoke of women's ongoing struggle to achieve equality – not only legal equality, but equality of condition. She used artwork from women of all ages and backgrounds to illustrate the idea that many mountains have been conquered by the women's movement but many more remain in our way. There are still so few women in political office; still such a lack of affordable and accessible child care and housing for women; still the medicalization of women's health and well-being; still an overwhelming amount of violence against women and children; still a lack of accessibility for women with disabilities; still blatant racism and oppression against any culture that does not conform to the white status quo; and the list goes on and on.

Despite the many challenges encountered by women, Frances also celebrated the intensely layered connections of women all over the world, and how they are visually represented in projects such as *Hooking Our Lives*. Frances ended her speech with an appropriate call to arms: "That we pull together as Women United, to continue our work, around the world, for equality, justice, and peace, once and for all." I think everyone in the room that day would agree with Frances that the road to equality is much more fulfilling when travelled together.



Pictured above is Frances Ennis hooking a rug entitled *We Are One* (with her granddaughter Abbegayle).



We Are One is a tribute to women who have suffered from violence in our world, and to those women who have worked tirelessly to end it. It honours women at home and around the world and speaks to the notion that though we are diverse we are also connected and united. In this rug our diversity is symbolized in the different colours, our unity in the same shapes, and our connectedness in the hands reaching out and touching each other in support. When one woman experiences violence, so do we all.



Wendolyn Schlamp-Hickey

Marguerite's Place Project Coordinator

Marguerite's Place will be the new home for the St. John's Women's Centre's services, programs as well as offices for the Women's Centre and SJSWC.

In addition, the facility will include eight new supportive housing units for women over the age of thirty who are living independently.



www.margueritesplace.ca



(709) 754-8500

A Little Horsin' Around: Marguerite's Place Update



Friends of SJSWC had a unique opportunity to get involved with Clovelly Stables this summer as we enjoyed a day of spectacular sights & riding talent at a horse show held on July 4. The event, called Canter for Change,

included competitive rides as well as musical freestyle rides, and proceeds raised will support the development of our new facility, Marguerite's Place.

Among the riders at Clovelly was none other than former PACSW president Leslie MacLeod (also a rider and competitor at Clovelly Stables) who provided the impetus for the event. Several women involved with Clovelly Stables have started a new organization called Future Strides and as Leslie explains, the group is "committed to providing opportunities for the community to become involved with horses and are equally committed to supporting important efforts like Marguerite's Place".

Fundraising events like this bring us closer to our new facility. Currently, our building site on Cashin Avenue Extension is being prepared, and construction will begin later this year. We are also thrilled to announce a new capital contribution for Marguerite's Place from United Way of Newfoundland and Labrador in the amount of \$25,000, bringing the total contribution from United Way to \$35,000.

With committed partners such as United Way we are approaching our fundraising goal. Stay tuned to Spokeswoman newsletter for more updates as this exciting project develops.



Those of you on **facebook** will want to join our new group set up to keep folks updated on new developments; it's easily found by searching "Marguerite's Place" while logged in to your account.



Climate Change and Women's Rights – a Global Challenge

by Michael Darcy & Mathilde Henry

Inadequate social programs, inequality in the workplace and home, and gender based violence are among the many obstacles that must be toppled in the fight for woman's rights. For women living in the planet's poorest countries, a major challenge is climate change.

For most Canadians climate change is a not a major issue, but for poor countries it is very real. Almost 250 million people are affected by climate related disasters each year. And contrary to popular belief, climate change does not impact men and women equally. In poorer countries, where the effects of climate change are most visible, women are affected the most.

In parts of Africa, droughts caused by climate change are already forcing women to travel much further distances to obtain water and firewood. The extra time and energy this takes means that many girls who would otherwise attend school, now spend their time to help with such tasks.

Climate change also provokes other catastrophes like floods that destroy entire villages, increase rates of fatal disease and malnutrition, and force women as primary care-givers to rebuild their entire lives.

Why is it that women in poor communities poor must pay the price for climate change, especially when they didn't cause it? Canada and other rich countries, know they must act. Canada has to honour its commitments and significantly reduce its greenhouse gas emissions. Canada must also be ready to assist women in poor communities as they adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Oxfam Canada is demanding adaptation and woman's rights be resolved at the December climate change meetings in Copenhagen. Oxfam Canada is currently holding a campaign to bring awareness of these issues.

Together, we can change Canada's embarrassing environmental policies, and combat the dangers of climate change. For more information on this campaign contact the Oxfam office at 753 2202. To sign the Oxfam petition visit www.oxfam.ca.

Disney has released a number of animated movies in recent years.



Has anyone else noticed that the **only** leading role given to girls is that of a **PRINCESS**?
~ Glenda Cabot



Top: Erin Gallant, Clovelly Stables Staff and Coordinator of the Horse Show
Bottom: Leslie MacLeod on her horse Andy on the SJSWC fundraising day at Clovelly Stables, July 2009.

STOP
HARMING
START
HELPING

WOMEN'S
RIGHTS
AND
CLIMATE
CHANGE

Oxfam
Canada





Linda Ross

President
Provincial Advisory
Council on the Status of
Women

A film to watch for:
Food Inc.



FOOD, INC.
A ROBERT KENNER FILM

The Economic Downturn and Challenges for Women

The old adage, *money makes the world go 'round*, has been true for a long time, but never more so than now. With the global economic downturn, people are becoming more conscious and cautious of how they spend their money. As we watch mills close and see layoffs in our communities, the latest jeans and shirts are seen as luxuries, not necessities. However, foregoing the jeans has meant that women working in the garment factories of Nicaragua, Guatemala and other countries producing the goods we buy, are now without work and unable to support extended families. Similarly, across Canada, countless women from countries such as the Philippines work as nannies, cleaning ladies etc., earning little money but dutifully sending some of what they earn back to family members in the Philippines to help them manage financially. As we know, these jobs, whether in the sweatshops of Latin America or as nannies or cleaners in Canada, are most often poorly paid with few or no benefits.

What can we do when we're struggling to make ends meet and take care of our own family here? It does present a conundrum and challenges us to rethink how our global economy is structured. Global warming and environmental degradation are very real crises in the world today resulting from our unsustainable consumption patterns. Studies have shown that women are the most severely impacted by these crises. Yet, in order to keep the world going 'round, keep women employed and food on the table, we are told we need to keep on producing and consuming. As women, we need to help society re-conceptualize what a healthy global economy should look like, and exploitation and unsustainable growth should not be the key ingredients of it.

PACSW for
2009-2012
term.



PACSW Update

by Elaine Condon

The newly appointed Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women (PACSW) held its first face to face meeting June 15th and 16th in St. John's. "The main issue, on a full agenda, was for the Council to set priorities for the current term," said Linda Ross, Council President/CEO.

Council members are chosen to bring diversity to the table, giving the PACSW the ability to consider issues from rural, urban and northern perspectives as well as through the experiences of women with disabilities, Aboriginal, multicultural and immigrant women, women in skilled trades and youth. "There was no shortage of issues discussed at the table," said Ross.

In terms of provincial government issues, the Council will focus on new initiatives within the Department of Justice such as the Family Violence Court Pilot, and continuing to work with The Violence Prevention Initiative and The Poverty Reduction Strategy. The possible privatization of foster care will be examined in terms of the impact on women as workers within that system and as mothers of children in care. The Council will monitor these programs through diverse perspectives and bring suggestions forward to the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women and the Ministers of Justice and Health.

Ross noted, "although the PACSW is a Provincial Advisory Council members concluded that many of the issues that need to be addressed are global in scope, crossing federal/provincial/municipal jurisdictions and requiring the engagement of people in community." An example is the ongoing issues for women related to employment and training. While women experience these issues differently, according to their ability, race, age, parental status, marital status, etc, a core problem common to many women continues to be the lack of childcare services.

For many women these problems are compounded. For women with disabilities, transportation continues to be a barrier. For multicultural and immigrant women, the credentialing process is a barrier. For rural women the lack of training in rural areas is a problem, and on and on.

"The PACSW will collaborate with other groups to bring together the information needed to inform a strategy to decrease barriers to employment and training. After all, women continue to earn 67% of what men earn. This is just not good enough," said Ross.

Front (L→R): Phyllis Seymour, Yamuna Kutty, Michelle Murdoch, Stephanie Flowers
Back (L→ R): Carolyn Lavers, Vice President, Regina Bailey, Hilda Whalen, Linda Ross
Missing: Mary Pia Benuen, Kelly Power and Vanessa MacArthur

Welcome Linda Ross

...as she settles into her new position as President and CEO of the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women.

Many of you will know Linda through her work with Oxfam locally and internationally, and the many community activities she's been involved in during her 25 years in Newfoundland and Labrador. She's especially appreciated for her commitment and dedication to feminism and community development principles, and for her long history of leadership in dealing with issues that affect women on a local and global scale.

Congratulations Linda! Spokeswoman wishes you happiness and success in your new position.



Brief Bio

In both work and volunteer roles, Kathy Dunderdale has exhibited an ongoing commitment to women's issues, anti-violence and rural development in our province. Minister Dunderdale has served as President of the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Municipalities, Director of the Canadian Federation of Municipalities, and as President of the Progressive Conservative Party of Newfoundland and Labrador. She has worked throughout the province in the fields of community development, communications, fisheries and social work.

Featured Feminist:

What does feminism mean to you?

Feminism is a perspective that I bring to every aspect of my life. It is such a part of who I am that I cannot imagine seeing the world in a different way. Many people interpret feminism differently, but for me it is all about social and economic justice.

When did you first identify as a feminist?

I don't know when I first labelled it, but ever since I was a young girl I was aware of inherent inequities based on gender. Growing up in a family with 7 sisters and 3 brothers, it was evident that there were differences in the types of duties we were assigned. We all worked hard, but the boys had opportunities outside the home that offered personal benefits, like income. The work assigned to the girls was primarily in the form of daily chores in the home. The expectations were different.

And then there were sports ... soccer was something I really enjoyed, but organized sports were for boys only. As I became more engaged in community life I also became even more aware of the ways in which life impacts differently on women, and the differences in how men and women are treated. Through my experiences I grew more passionate about gender equality.

Name a woman that has inspired you to get into politics.

My mother was very engaged in politics, both at the community and provincial level. Our kitchen table was a place of lively debate and discussion. We were encouraged to put forward our views and to have them challenged. We all had a voice. In later years, Lynn Verge became a good friend and has always been there to offer encouragement.

How important is the support of local women's groups in your work?

The fact that we found ourselves at loggerheads with some of the women's community early in our mandate was difficult. But we have all done good work and have come a long way in the past 5 years. We have a good dialogue and ultimately we are all working toward the same goal. I don't know where we'd be without the grassroots movement, particularly the volunteers on the ground who have so much passion and courage and commitment. Traditionally, women's contributions at the community level have not always been honoured or valued ... hopefully, that is changing.

Kathy Dunderdale

Prepared by Glenda Cabot

What is it like to be a feminist in such a male-dominated field?

Being a feminist is difficult to separate from just being who I am; once you begin to see the world through the gender lens, it becomes an integral part of you. Anybody who deals with me deals with me as a feminist, because every time I come to the table, I bring those views and that analysis with me.

Our political system was designed by men for men, and that can pose challenges. Likewise, governments are reflective of the societies they represent, so within these halls you will find the same attitudes evident in any random grouping of people. But, in terms of my own caucus I am very supported. And it has been my experience that if you present a rational argument, people will be respectful of that. How can reasonable people disagree with the principles of economic and social equality?

What are the top issues facing feminism in NL?

We have to reach out to women in the broader community, to help them understand why the work of organizations like the Status of Women Councils and the PACSW is important. We need them to understand the value of their participation. We need a broader constituency, a critical mass to support and offer input to the many issues that affect them. This requires outreach. I would like to see workshops outside major centres with the goal of creating awareness and discussion at the community level.

Also, women need to become more involved in the political process. Life impacts on us differently and women need to bring our perspectives to the table. Not all women are at a place where they can take on another responsibility, but they can offer their support to ensure that women are part of policy-making and governance. There are strong, talented women here and we have to seek them out and encourage them to do this work.

Reflect on the changes you have witnessed in the past 20 years in the world of women and politics in NL.

I do see positive change. There are more opportunities for women. I see more recognition of the value that women bring to the table and an overall awareness, by both genders, of the barriers women face. Although we still have a long way to go, there are more women involved in more formal leadership roles such as elected office and governing boards. I do find it frustrating that we still face some of the same inequities that I saw when I was in university, and there is no doubt that there is still a lot of work to be done. Eventually, I would love to see us get to a place where gender considerations are an integral part of everyone's way of thinking.

Ms. Dunderdale has two children, Sara (Matt) and Tom (Jillian), and three grandsons, Jack, Nathan and Liam. She makes her home in St. John's.



Following her election to the House of Assembly in 2003, Minister Dunderdale served as Minister of Innovation, Trade and Rural Development, and Minister Responsible for the Rural Secretariat and later as Minister of Natural Resources. On October 31, 2008, she was appointed Deputy Premier, Minister of Natural Resources, Minister Responsible for the Forestry and Agrifoods Agency and Minister Responsible for the Status of Women.

CHEERS to:



Lori-Ann Campbell on being elected President of the NL Liberal Women's Commission ... YAY LORI-ANN!

Western Regional Coalition to End Violence and the Central West Committee Against Violence for voicing their concerns over the ridiculously lenient sentence handed down to former RNC Superintendent Robert Garland in Corner Brook in June. Superintendent Garland plead guilty to sexually assaulting a female junior officer in November 2008 and was subsequently given a conditional discharge and twelve months probation, while his victim suffers a physical and mental life sentence.

Julie Payette, a Canadian astronaut, who completed a two week stint and her second visit to the International Space Station on July 28.

Mary Adams who is the first Inuit commissioner, recently appointed by the Newfoundland and Labrador Human Rights Commission.

Minnie Vallis who was honoured as the inaugural recipient of the Senior of Distinction award for the Western Region. Congratulations, Minnie!



Programs and Services at the Women's Centre

WEEKLY PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat/Sun
Empowerment Group Series	Healthy Living Groups	Evening Drop In 7:00-9pm	Afternoon Drop In 12:30-4:00	Morning Yarn 10:00-12:00pm	Closed

For more details and information, visit any of the following:

150 LeMarchant Road

www.sjswc.ca

tel. 753 0220

Early Days of Disability Policy Office is Encouraging

by Mark Lane, Executive Director
Coalition of Persons with Disabilities (COD)

According to the Human Resources Labour and Employment website <http://www.hrle.gov.nl.ca/hrle/> The Disability Policy Office was created to serve as the primary focal point for Provincial Government departments and agencies in developing policies and programs that include persons with disabilities and that are barrier-free. Its purpose is to work across government, strengthening partnerships with community agencies, business and the public sector so that all stakeholders can build a fully inclusive society together.

Since being established on June 1st 2009 the Coalition of Persons with Disabilities (COD) has worked very closely with the Disability Policy Office (DPO) regarding a variety of issues. The DPO's director Ms. Mary Reid and her staff has always been readily available to discuss issues relating to persons with disabilities and the barriers that they unnecessarily face day-to-day.

Currently, COD and the DPO are working collaboratively to organize a public discussion forum relating to the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is a new international human rights treaty aimed at promoting, protecting and ensuring the equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by persons with disabilities.

(continued on page 16)

Michelle Murdoch Wins Disabilities National Award

by Elaine Condon & Susan Ralph

Michelle Murdoch of St. John's has been presented with a national award for her 'Valuable Contributions to the Disability Rights Movement in Canada'. The 2008-9 award from the Council of Canadians with Disabilities is presented each year to a Newfoundland and Labrador citizen for his or her 'dedication and integrity in the continuing pursuit of full participation in society of people with disabilities in the province'.

Michelle has been a committed volunteer, grassroots leader and mentor within the disability movement in this province for over 15 years. Over this time she has been an activist and catalyst for change. She is often the first to notice an inequity, share the information with the disability community and work to shift traditional ideas about disability and barriers that interfere with the full participation in society of those with disabilities.

She served on the board of Directors of the Independent Living Resource Centre (ILRC) for several terms, and on many of ILRC's committees. She works nationally through her volunteer position as NL Representative on the national Board of Independent Living Canada. Recently she was appointed to a second three-year term on the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women.

Her research on engaging women with disabilities received the John Lord Award for excellence in Participatory Action Research.

CHEERS to:
(continued)

United Way of Newfoundland and Labrador for their very generous donation of \$25,000 to the capital campaign in support of Marguerite's Place.

Barb Hutchings who broke into the male-dominated world of fire-fighting in Spaniard's Bay. After having several applications turned down by the department, despite being well-trained, the town council stepped in and voted her in this Spring. Ms. Hutchings is eager to put her skills and training to good use for the people of Spaniard's Bay.

~ JEERS on following page ~

Pictured (to the left) is Susan Ralph, President of the NL Coalition of Persons with Disabilities (COD) and NL representative of the Council of Canadians with Disabilities (CCD), presenting the award to Michelle Murdoch.

Congratulations, Michelle. Keep up the valuable work.





Alberta Tory MLA Doug Elniski, for his sexist blog posting on June 13th. Elniski (happens to be the father of 3 daughters!) writes, "Men are attracted to smiles, so smile and don't give me that 'treated equal' stuff." He has a history of making lewd and homophobic comments and gets off the hook with an apology. Why do these people get to keep their positions when they ignore our national values of gender equality and diversity?

The **Lingerie Football League**, for insulting the ability and passion of women athletes, who struggle everyday to have their sports teams respected and compensated equally to men's sports teams. The Lingerie Football League features women wearing uniforms that rival string bikinis for lack of coverage, competing against each other in full make-up. To learn about real women's football visit the Independent Women's Football League: <http://www.iwflsports.com>

Afghan Women Protest New Law on Home Life

written by Dexter Filkins

edited by Glenda Cabot, printed in *New York Times*, April 15, 2009

KABUL, Afghanistan — The young women stepped off the bus and moved toward the protest march just beginning on the other side of the street when they were spotted by a mob of men.

"Get out of here, you whores!" the men shouted. "Get out!"

The women scattered as the men moved in.

"We want our rights!" one of the women shouted, turning to face them. "We want equality!"

The women ran to the bus and dived inside as it rumbled away, with the men smashing the taillights and banging on the sides.

"Whores!"

But the march continued anyway. About 300 Afghan women, facing an angry throng three times larger than their own, walked the streets of the capital on Wednesday to demand that Parliament repeal a new law that introduces a range of Taliban-like restrictions on women, and permits, among other things, marital rape.

It was an extraordinary scene. Women are mostly illiterate in this impoverished country, and they do not, generally speaking, enjoy anything near the freedom accorded to men. But there they were, most of them young, many in jeans, defying a threatening crowd and calling out slogans heavy with meaning.



With the Afghan police keeping the mob at bay, the women walked two miles to Parliament, where they delivered a petition calling for the law's repeal.

"Whenever a man wants sex, we cannot refuse," said Fatima Husseini, 26, one of the marchers. "It means a woman is a kind of property, to be used by the man in any way that he wants."



The law, approved by both houses of Parliament and signed by President Hamid Karzai applies to the Shiite minority only. Women and human rights groups have protested three parts of the law especially.

One provision makes it illegal for a woman to resist her husband's sexual advances. A second provision requires a husband's permission for a woman to work outside the home or go to school. And a third makes it illegal for a woman to refuse to "make herself up" or "dress up" if that is what her husband wants.

The passage of the law has amounted to something of a historical irony. Afghan Shiites, who make up close to 20 percent of the population, suffered horrendously under the Taliban, who regarded them as apostates. Since 2001, the Shiites, particularly the Hazara minority, have been enjoying a renaissance.

President Karzai, who relies on vast support from the United States and other Western governments to stay in power, has come under intense international criticism for signing the bill into law. Responding to the outcry, Mr. Karzai has begun looking for a way to remove the most controversial parts of the law.

L →R: Catherine Street (SJSWC board chair), Theresa Murphy (Summer Staff), Sonya Bowen (Drop-In volunteer) and Nicole Kieley (Staff)

The Rebuilding Power of Outreach

As Program Development Coordinator, I am thrilled to announce the successful pilot of the Women's Centre's first outreach Empowerment Group Series! Working in partnership with Eastern Region Committee Against Violence (ERCAV), myself and volunteer Joanne Boone have been travelling to Clarendville each Monday morning in June to offer programming in an area that has few supports for women who have experienced violence.

ERCAV's Project Coordinator Laurie Smith, along with many women of the group, shared the need for a safe space to connect with each other. Many cited isolation as a barrier in their attempts to rebuild from an abusive relationship. The creation of a safe and non judgmental support group has proven to be a powerful tool for participants, many of whom expressed an interest in continuing to connect after the program had ended. Due to the overwhelming response, I feel we have clearly tapped into a great need to provide more services and programs that can be taken outside St. John's.



Nicole Kieley

Program Development
Coordinator

25
years

Gander Status of Women Council Celebrates 25 Years!

by Yvonne Gillingham, Coordinator for Gander Women Centre

On May 21st, 2009, women from Gander, across the province, and beyond, gathered in Gander to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Gander Status of Women Council.

In 1984 a small group of women in Gander began meeting in each others' homes to discuss the issues women were facing. The topics of interest for them, at the time, included child care, pornography, and justice for women. They felt some action had to happen and decided to hold a community meeting, inviting Ann Bell, President of the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women. Ann met with the women of the area, and at this meeting a steering committee was formed. The 14 women who formed the committee would later become the Gander Status of Women Council. Within a year they opened the Gander Women's Centre, a place to call their own, and hosted a province-wide women's conference.

Now 25 years later we come to celebrate these women and the others who followed. The planning committee chose the Albatross because this was the very spot that the first meeting was held. What a fitting place to celebrate and ponder what we achieved! The current Council opened the evening with a slide show of the events that the Councils had held over the years, while in the background played the Dixie Chicks' song "I'm not ready to make nice."

Elaine Condon, former coordinator, was the keynote speaker. Elaine's speech was from her thesis research. It was very thought provoking because it was a testament to what is happening to our woman's movement. Many of the women there felt challenged, and a renewed energy passed through the room. I was one of them and wondered if there was something I could be doing. Ms. Condon spoke from the heart, and this made the speech real.

Nicole Parson, also a former coordinator, entertained the crowd and had us all on our feet singing "I Am Woman", and we did roar! The meal was great, the company even better.

Closing reflections, spoken by Laurie Ann Saunders, long time member and former Chair, focused on what her involvement with the Gander Status of Women Council had done for her. Our guests added their thoughts and thanks to tree that will sit in the Gander Women's Centre for all to see.

There have been many challenges and disappointments along the way. Knowing this, we strive to continue the work that our foremothers began.

Ferron: girl on a road

Film by Gerry Rogers

Without a doubt a highlight of the 2009 *Nickel Film Festival* was Gerry Rogers' latest film: *Ferron: girl on a road*. All in the audience were moved to uproarious laughter and empathetic tears, as we followed Gerry Rogers follow Ferron through the story of her life and her music. In comments to the Augusta Productions website, the film is described as wonderful, beautiful, and gorgeous, and I concur. I left the theatre envying all those people fortunate to call Ferron a friend.

The film, with screenings scheduled worldwide, has already been awarded Best Documentary at the 2009 *InsideOut* Film and Video Festival in Toronto.

For more information, visit www.augustaproductions.com. Copies soon be available at The Travel Bug on Water St.

~ Elaine Condon



The women who gathered that night know these challenges. They laughed, talked and supported each other to continue with hope into the next day.

Thank you all for coming and bringing the laughter and tears and memories. To all the women's Council's in the Newfoundland and Labrador we say You Go Sister!!!!

See you at the 50th!

Olivia Canela

by Paula Mendonça

I was born in a family where the quest for the perfect moisturizer is engraved in our brains from infancy. My mother takes her skin care routine as seriously as religion. I still find it amusing that when I was hardly an adolescent I was giving advice to friends about what they should do in order to prevent those future wrinkles. This growing knowledge allowed me to find a cosmetic line my skin was very happy with. It also made me aware of several ingredients that compose something as simple as a lip gloss. I found out that some of the chemicals present in many of the cosmetics that we use daily may be linked to cancer and reproductive problems; I was persuaded that the used of just chemical is unnecessary.

My disenchantment with mainstream cosmetic industry as well as my scientific background led to research into affordable and safe cosmetic alternatives. That alternative was clear: make my own products! In the beginning, such an undertaking was slightly overwhelming, but I soon found it empowering to mix butters and essential oils to create an all-natural body product that my skin embraced without any problems. Before long, I was presenting my creations to friends and family, and it was their positive feedback (and eagerness to get hold of more product) that made me consider taking this venture to the next level. And that is how Olivia Canela was born...

Olivia Canela is a line of body care products where the ingredients are all-natural, free of pesticides, artificial scents or dyes. Olivia Canela goes a bit further than just an all-natural line, since the ingredients are sourced from 'ethical' suppliers. The jars are dark glass (to prevent deterioration of the essential oils and to avoid plastic) and the recycled paper labels were created by a local graphic designer. Now, Olivia Canela products include facial and body moisturizers, body butters, lip balms and massage oils. They can usually be found by contacting oliviacanela@hotmail.com.

Spokeswomen Committee

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Phyllis Artiss
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Jillian Freeman
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(layout/graphics)



Have a safe skin care routine!



Women's Centre Board

L → R: Anne Kennedy,
Jennifer Mercer (Chair),
Joanne Boone
Missing: Carol Ann Saunders

There are many systemic barriers that arise when people with disabilities try to access a service, program or opportunity. It is unacceptable for people to be excluded because they have a disability. COD will continue to work closely with the DPO, community organizations, businesses and most importantly consumers, to identify and eliminate these barriers.

The Provincial Advisory Committee for the Inclusion of People with Disabilities is in the process of being set up to advise the Minister Responsible for the Status of Persons with Disabilities on current issues.

This Council will be made up of 12 to 18 people who have disability related experiences and knowledge. They will be men and women of different ages who come from small and large communities.

As the Executive Director of COD I look forward to working with Mary Reid and the Disability Policy Office to: promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of society; engage people with disabilities and their advocates in developing ways to identify and remove barriers; help all government departments develop policies and programs that do not exclude persons with disabilities; promote positive attitudes; and raise awareness of disability issues.

Contributions for future issues are always welcome. Just email spokeswomannl@gmail.com.

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