



Are you a feminist?

by Sheila Keats and Glenda Cabot (Co-Editors)

International Women's Day has been celebrated since 1911 ... back then it gave brave women (feminists) a platform to organize, to fight for the right to work, training, the vote, the end of discrimination. Today, we stand on the shoulders of the Suffragettes, women of influence in the early 1900's, who saw that the women and children of the working class were often left cold and hungry while men drank their wages in warm pubs. They were moved to fight for social and economic change ... especially the right to vote in a climate where women were thought too "emotional" to enjoy such rights!

ARE YOU A FEMINIST?

The World Wars of the 20th century left a shortage of men at home and women were encouraged to work outside the home for the first time. Having their own money and a taste of the power that goes with money, many decided being a housewife was not enough anymore. This was not an easy decision for many. The backlash was harsh. Feminists were called 'women's libbers', 'man haters' and 'bra-burners'. In trying to pave the way for girls to lead safe, empowered lives, women took a position that left many further marginalized and vulnerable.

These trailblazers (aka feminists!) accomplished a lot in a few years...

If you read back issues of Spokeswoman from just 40 years ago, the stories of women's lives in this province would shock some of you. One woman had to get permission from her husband to get her tubes tied; another woman's salary counted for half her husband's when applying for a mortgage; people refused to receive oil from a truck driven by a woman; another was fired for using the word "ogled" on the radio; and women were refused the right to sit on a jury.

So, we do indeed have reason today to celebrate. But we cannot stop now! Reproductive rights and pay equity, for example, are not a given. Until child care costs significantly less than the average working woman's wage, women will never have the choices afforded to men. We still cannot walk alone at night. Rape and violence remain a strategy of war in our world. And if we lift our heads and look around, we know that many women are still where we were 100 years ago...

Are you a *feminist*?... will young women stand on your shoulders someday?

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Charmaine Davidge

**Executive Director
SJSWC & WC**

YouTube Site

*Stephen Lewis at a
Conference on AIDS,
Toronto, August, 2006 –
addressing gender equality
with passion.*
http://ca.youtube.com/watch?v=_EkIQBmJ_VM&feature=related



Costa Kasimos

**Executive Director of
Planned Parenthood –
Newfoundland &
Labrador's Sexual
Health Centre**

Executive Director's Report

Happy International Women's Day! The United Nations has chosen as the theme for IWD this year – "Sharing the Caring for the Future." This theme "will focus on the contribution of women in their caring roles, in both the paid and unpaid workforce, and explore the strategies needed to share the responsibility for caring across our community."

I can think of no place which epitomizes this theme better than the St. John's Women's Centre. Our dedicated staff and volunteers work hard to provide support and services to women and children in our community. We also have great support from the community to assist us in doing this work. Our Christmas Program was a fabulous success which allowed us to assist 167 families. Marguerite's Place has also galvanized our community to recognize the need for supportive housing for women and we are very grateful for the monetary and logistical support we have received for this project.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the incredible women in our community who enrich our lives through their caring. Their dedication and commitment, both paid and unpaid really does make this world a much better place. In celebrating the fabulous women in our community I would like to remember an incredible woman whom we lost last year. Sheri Woolfrey was a member of the St. John's Status of Women Council Board, Women's Centre Drop-in volunteer and dedicated *Spokewoman* volunteer. She is greatly missed by all of us.

Exciting Changes at Planned Parenthood: NL Sexual Health Centre

Three months have passed since I became Executive Director and in that time a number of changes have taken place:

- Tara Thomas, our former Client Services Coordinator, is replacing Jennifer Spracklin as Education Coordinator.
- Jennifer MacPherson is our new Client Services Coordinator. She has been a long-time volunteer with Planned Parenthood and is a natural fit in her new role.
- Irene Perry is back for Friday morning Pap clinics.
- We have installed a height adjustable examination bed, making easier access available for persons with mobility impairments.
- We hope change will come in the form of a new building. I am working on securing funding to make this happen.

Special thanks to our Volunteers for organizing our annual Auction and Dinner on Feb. 14. Thanks also to our host for the event, Wayne Bartlett!



Put Citizens On Equal Footing, Mayor O'Keefe!

by Glenda Cabot

photo by Heather Reardon

Not clearing the snow from our sidewalks is such a blatant act of discrimination that I can barely contain my outrage! It affects the most vulnerable, marginalized groups in this city, making their lives harsher, more isolating and expensive, in a climate that is harsh enough and economically tough as it is.

Take a drive around, Mr. O'Keefe, (or dare I suggest...a walk around!) See what so many of us see: a young mother holds her young daughter as if shielding her from death itself (she probably is!) as they wait for the school bus...another woman on Empire Ave. gingerly weaves her way door-to-door over the icy sidewalks delivering the Telegram...countless others balance grocery bags as they slip and slide, fall, or get splashed...a mom with a baby stroller walks with one eye on the baby and the other watching out for traffic because she has to use the busy city street...

Those are the citizens you see. What of those you can't see? The men, women, and children who are shut in, unable to steer chairs or navigate with canes or walkers. What about them, Mr. O'Keefe? What about them? Our winters are dreary enough...how much longer must they seem when you do not have the option to go past your door?

Then there is the financial burden. A friend of mine had to cancel a doctor's appointment because she could not walk to the bus stop and she could not afford a taxi. There are people living in poverty who go without food so they can take a cab to an appointment at the hospital. What if that was you...your mother or sister?

Sisters, in the spirit of the theme of IWD, let's show we care about the citizens of our community. I implore you to take up this cause and demand that city hall give us equal access by clearing our sidewalks. Let's walk the talk! Call your councillors...flood them with emails...go to city hall! We can get this policy changed if we pull together!

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Sheri's family would appreciate hearing from anyone who would like to share their special thought or memory.

You can contact Sandy, Katie, and Emily at sandy.woolfrey@nf.sympatico.ca.

The Spokeswoman Committee was blessed to have Sheri on our team. She was a key contributor at every level, from planning to writing to formatting. She was our friend. She is dearly missed.

At Sheri's request, donations in her memory may be made to *Marguerite's Place*.

For further info, please contact Wendolyn Schlamp-Hickey at 754-8500.



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Random Things About Sheri Woolfrey (1955-2008)

1. Sheri loved Christmas.
2. She wore a bright yellow raincoat.
3. She danced around the kitchen with her daughters.
4. She was an "Outdoors Grandma" to Alex and Liam.
5. Sheri made excellent oat bread with sumptuous baked beans.
6. She dropped off all her recyclables to Ellen.
7. Sheri's eyes lit up with intelligence and warmth and humour.
8. She worried about women in this city who are hungry.
9. She joined a writing group. She loved to read.
10. She volunteered. She was on the board of SJSWC, the Management Committee, the House Committee, and the Spokeswoman Committee. Sheri worked at the drop in at the Women's Centre.
11. And she adored flowers.
12. Sheri formatted the Spokeswoman newsletter, early on with help from her daughter Sandy. She was so proud in November 2008 to declare she had finished an issue all on her own...Yah, Sheri!
13. She was maid of honour at her daughter Katie's wedding last July.
14. Sheri WAS ALWAYS taking pictures at the Women's Centre!!!
15. She watched Oprah and learned how to manage her money from Suze Orman. She couldn't stand Eckhart Tolle...
16. She was retired from her career as a home economics teacher in Twillingate.
17. Sheri was so proud to be at her daughter Emily's graduation as a teacher last October.
18. Sheri was a big fan of the Split Peas.

19. Sheri was an active member of her church, Gower Street United.
20. Sheri's mom visited frequently from Liverpool, NS.
21. She always said, "The best car to drive is the one you don't owe any money on."
22. She used to help women apply for their home heating rebate.
23. She loved aerobics at the Aquarena and the socializing and coffee after with "the girls". (She also loved Boston Pizza ... Hawaiian – style ..yum!)
24. "In a life filled with girls, two sisters...and three daughters," Sheri remarked, "I would not trade these two little guys (grandsons Alex and Liam) for anything!"
25. Sheri was passionate about her daughters, Sandy, Katie, and Emily... she spoke constantly of them; she was so proud of them and so happy to spend time with them!

A huge bouquet of thanks to Vi Tulk and the Parish of St. Mary the Virgin who welcomed representatives from SJSWC as their guests at their sold-out event, "**Celebrating Women Outreach Luncheon**", held at the Bella Vista (February 7). Marie White graced the event as guest speaker, and the parish contributed proceeds from the sold-out event to *Marguerite's Place*.

All of these events bring us closer to our new facility; construction is starting later this year at our site on Cashin Avenue Extension near Mundy Pond. Stay tuned for more exciting events in the months ahead!

Raising the Roof & Celebrating Women:

Marguerite's Place Update

SJSWC is proud to have *Marguerite's Place* named as one of the beneficiaries of this year's local **Raising the Roof** fundraising campaign. Proceeds will be shared by four community organizations in St. John's who serve on the frontlines in providing service and finding solutions to homelessness. SJSWC shares this distinction along with the AIDS Committee of NL (Tommy Sexton Centre), St. John's Native Friendship Centre, and Community Youth Network.

Highlights of this year's campaign included Toque Tuesday (February 3), when Board Member Cathy Russell, Project Coordinator Wendolyn Schlamp-Hickey, and Glenn Furlong of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation met with much success in selling toques at a luncheon of the Eastern Newfoundland Home Builders Association. Pancake Tuesday (February 24) boasted breakfasts at three locations on the Avalon which raised additional funds and brought much needed attention to the work of ending homelessness in our province.



Wendolyn Schlamp-Hickey

Marguerite's Place
Project Coordinator

Marguerite's Place is a new initiative and will be the new home for the Women's Centre, housing all services, programs and offices of both the Women's Centre and SJSWC. In addition, it will include eight new supportive housing units for women over the age of thirty who are living independently.

For more information, please visit:
www.margueritesplace.ca
or contact Wendolyn at 754-8500.



A Birth Story: The Role of a Midwife

Living in an isolated community on the Labrador coast, I had to leave home for St. Anthony at 38 weeks by Twin Otter. Upon arrival, it was reassuring to be examined by my midwife, a registered nurse with whom I had already developed a relationship.

In our conversations, she helped me prepare for the three stages of labour, as well as encouraging me to take walks, and to visit the OBS floor as the big day approached.

Rachel Stone

I am a 26 year old mother of two. Daniel was born March 12/07 and Rihanna one year later on his birthday. Both children entered this world by the hands of a midwife.

Facebook Groups to check out...

The Medicalization of Childbirth.

I'll be hit by a car in St. John's because they don't plow the sidewalks

Have you read...?

Great Expectations: Twenty-Four True Stories About Childbirth
Editors: Dede Crane and Lisa Moore

Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance
Author: Barack Obama

The two births were unique. The first was a long tiring 15 hours from beginning to joyful end with no actual pain and 50 minutes of pushing; with the second, I had extremely painful back labour for 3 days before pushing for just seven minutes.

For the first labour, the midwife stayed with me for almost every moment and coached me step by step about when to push and how. For the second labour, she would check in on me, give me back rubs while my husband and I waited for complete dilation, and let me tell her when I was ready to push. Once the babies were born, the midwife and another pediatric nurse helped me and the baby get settled into our hospital room and would check frequently on how we were doing. They assisted with the basics of breast-feeding, and helped with the baby's first bath. They encouraged me to stay at the hospital until I felt well and confident enough to go home. And before I left, the midwife stopped by with the doctor to issue the discharge papers and make one final check before saying goodbye.

So, I didn't see much of the doctor: it was the midwife who was there by my side patiently and encouragingly throughout each wonderful childbirth experience. I do not have any regrets about the birthing plan I chose and I would encourage other mothers with low risk pregnancies to take this option if it's available to them. Midwives play an integral and compassionate role in making childbirth a natural experience for mother and baby.



Helen Porter



Warm up for Winter

Program Development Report

While we are just a few months into the new year, a wonderful array of Women's Centre events, programs, and development are on their way! Over the past few months we are happy to welcome new volunteers and training programs, as well as information sessions for women. Here are just a few highlights that I was happy to be a part of!

Because the legal process can be overwhelming and unfriendly to women needing support, the Women's Centre partnered with Legal Aid to provide information sessions to individuals seeking to know more about Legal Aid, accessibility, and eligibility. In working with Lori Savory, a representative from Legal Aid, we were able to connect women to a service that they would not have otherwise accessed. The sessions fostered engaging discussion around our legal system, as well as possible action plans on how to access legal service.

Attendance at the Empowerment Group session has continued to grow, and the need for more groups and facilitators has become apparent. To meet this need, the Women's Centre has begun to develop capacity that will expand this valuable program into the vision of Marguerite's Place. I am happy to introduce new volunteer development that centres on training facilitators for the Empowerment Group. Volunteers with relevant education and background in facilitation have been approached to participate in this specialized group training.

Along with these new initiatives, the Women's Centre has been gearing up for the March 8th International Women's Day (IWD) Bread and Roses Brunch. The brunch is a popular event that promotes the strength and activism of women globally. Along with advocating for women's rights and celebrating our successes, the Women's Centre will also be hosting the Bread and Roses silent auction. This event will fund many of the Centre's program initiatives for the year. As a member of this year's IWD committee, I am thrilled about this year's event and encourage you all to join the celebration!

This is snap shot of some of the work that has been taking place here at the Centre. With the input and support of wonderful volunteers and staff, programming and initiatives continue to grow and develop. I look forward to reporting on more new and exciting work!



2009 SJSWC Staff Picture

L-R: Rhonda Simpson (office manager), Charmaine Davidge (executive director), Wendolyn Schlamp-Hickey (project coordinator), Nicole Kieley (program development)



Nicole Kieley

Program Development
Coordinator



Workshop on
*Women and Mass
Politics: Behaviour
and Participation*

Hosted by Department of
Political Science, Memorial
University

April 4th and 5th

Discussing current research in
relation to women in politics.

Inviting students, faculty and
politicians.

Contact Amanda Bittner
(Course Instructor)
abittner@mun.ca

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Fast Facts

Lana Mary Payne, born August 1965 in St. John's, mostly raised in Deer Lake.



Mother to Kate, and married to Ed Whalen, a biology instructor at Memorial University.



Wrote a bi-weekly column for The Telegram.



Between 1991 and 2008 she worked in Research, Communications and Public Policy for Fish, Food and Allied Workers (FFAW/CAW), an affiliate of the Canadian Auto Workers Union.



Elected as President of the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labour in November 2008. The federation has more than 30 union affiliates, with 500 union locals, representing more than 65,000 working women and men throughout the province of NL.



A working member of a number of committees at the provincial and national level including:

- Canadian Labour Congress UI Committee
- NL Strategic Partnership Council
- NL Labour Market Committee
- NL Child Care Coalition
- NL Make Work Pay Coalition

Featured Feminist:

We here at The Spokeswoman are very excited to present you with a new feature, intended to celebrate the incredible work and unfaltering passion of various feminists in Newfoundland and Labrador. In each issue, we will print an interview with another amazing woman who is doing her part to keep the feminist flame alive in her community.

The first Featured Feminist is the new President of the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labour, Lana Payne.

When did you first identify as a feminist?

Well I can honestly say it wasn't a bolt of lightning. It wasn't one specific event or incident, but something that grew as I grew. I think I was always aware of gender inequality. As a young girl, I watched how hard my mom worked for so little pay and that had a tremendous impact on me. Certainly my first real job, as a journalist, taught me much about injustice and inequality, and that is probably when I first started calling myself a feminist or thinking of myself as a feminist. I was working as a journalist in 1989 when the Montreal Massacre happened. This was a tragic and life-altering moment in history for many young women. And I would say that the labour movement, and specifically my union, has afforded me an incredible opportunity to actually turn my feminism into action.

What does feminism mean to you?

It means equality – economically, politically, socially and culturally.

What do you think are the top three issues facing women in Newfoundland and Labrador today?

- #1: Pay inequity.
- #2: A lack of accessible, affordable, high-quality child care.
- #3: An inadequate home and elder care system which places care-giving on the backs of women who are either doing this work for free or who are incredibly underpaid.



Lana Payne

Prepared by Jillian Freeman

Name a woman who inspires you.

It is impossible to name just one woman. But if I had to start with one, it would be my mother. She is brave and strong. She has an incredible work ethic and a very big heart. Being part of the labour movement, we have this amazing thing called the sisterhood and I have been inspired by so many of my union sisters – women who have slugged their guts out on fish plant floors and fishing boats, women who fight everyday for women in their workplaces, women who volunteer their time because they believe in a better world. Really good friends inspire me. And while she is far from being a woman, my seven-year-old daughter inspires me everyday. Her independence, her ability to negotiate (no is never a final answer), her joy. As excited as we all were when Barack Obama got elected, she reminded me that it might have been a woman. No doubt, Hillary put a few more cracks in the glass ceiling, but the ceiling is still there.

Any words of wisdom for your fellow feminists?

Wisdom? I am not sure if these are words of wisdom or just what I have learned over the years. First of all not everyone gets it, but never assume that just because they don't always get it that they are against you. Sometimes you can find allies in the least likely of places. Never give up! Never give up! I guess that's where my daughter gets the "no is never a final answer" attitude. Do your homework! Figure out the other side's arguments and dismantle them. This has served me well over the years. And I guess I would say try not to get discouraged when there is a setback (even one as big as Stephen Harper) which is why it is incredibly important to celebrate the victories with friends and wine. Finally, I'd probably repeat something a female prime minister of Norway once said: Women's equality gains, women's rights, are never given, but taken. Ultimately, what we are talking about is who has the money and who has the power. For the most part those who have the money and the power don't like to share either.

Is feminism an outdated movement?

Feminism will only become outdated when we can stop counting. Stop counting how much less women make. Stop counting the number of women in our legislatures. Stop counting the number of women premiers we have in Canada. Stop counting how little of the economic pie goes to women. Stop counting the number of women who suffer from violence or who are murdered by their male partners or ex-partners. Feminism will be outdated when there is true equality; when we stop counting. And we are a far cry from that.

I still see it
Sitting there-
Our kitchen table,
It was white
Looked like it had been hand
painted
Maybe my dad
Repainted it once
When I was just small
I can't
Remember
But I can imagine his calloused
Dirt stained hands
Clenched
Brushing over the fragile
woodwork
I can't
Remember
But this table had sat there
For as long as I could
Remember
It never meant much to me
It was something you take
For granted I guess
It was just there

Until the night
I was outside the kitchen window
On my tiptoes, peeking in
Trying to understand the rage I
heard
Its image pasted itself on my skull
In the instant I dared to glance
through
I watched the heavy white
Fly across the room
Splintering against the wall
Its legs breaking-
People inside-
Breaking

A few days later
The table was gone
And so were we

But with each visit
I enter
Still half expecting to be greeted
by
The big ceramic table
Only to find the small bachelor
brown
A reminder to me
Sometimes things are
Damaged
Beyond repair.

~ Elizabeth A. Lewis 2004

CHEERS!

...to these fabulous & inspiring women...

Francis Ennis: grassroots feminist activist, community worker, researcher, writer, facilitator and hooker of glorious rugs. Congrats on receiving the 2008 Person's Award!

June Layden: promoted to Superintendent of RNC. Yah!

Zita Cobb: spearheading the promotion of Fogo and Change Islands in a bid for economic sustainability through Shorefast (www.shorefast.org).

Lily Cole: our new President of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teacher's Association.

Francis Murphy: appointed to the new position of Status of Women Coordinator of the Nunatsiavut Government helping develop a Regional Inuit Women's organization in Nunatsiavut.

Dr. S. Bharati Reddy: received *Specialist of the Year Award* from the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons.

Marie Wadden: was nominated for the prestigious Shaughnessy Cohen Award for her book *Where the Pavement Ends; the Aboriginal Recovery Movement and the Urgent Need for Reconciliation*.

Excerpts From FAFIA's Paper On Federal Budget

Prepared for FAFIA (Feminist Alliance for International Action) with tax policy ADVISORS Kathleen Lahey, Queen's University and Lisa Philipps, Osgoode Hall.

The Federal Budget 2009 was promised as an 'economic recovery' and 'stimulus' budget, and a plan to ensure that those who are most economically vulnerable would get support during a period of recession. The reality is that the Conservative's Budget abandons those who are in the lowest income brackets and offers little to the majority of women.

For example, most of the \$16 billion allocated for **infrastructure** will go to jobs mainly held by men. No money has been targeted for **social infrastructure** (child care, health care, home care) where jobs are mainly held by women and provide essential supports for women. Because of **employment insurance** rules, two out of three women who pay into EI cannot get benefits when they are unemployed. The rules discriminate against women because women are more likely to work part time, or intermittently in order to accommodate primary child care responsibility in the family. Budget 2009 fails to address the critical and immediate issues of **poverty, homelessness and hunger** in Canada – each of which is experienced disproportionately by women and particular groups of women.

Regarding **tax cuts**, personal income tax cuts are not well targeted to lower and middle income earners, the people most likely to spend every extra dollar on consumer goods. Women earn an average income of \$27,000 per year, while men's average income is \$45,000. With Budget 2009, most women will not qualify for the **home renovation** or **home buyers tax credit**.

The Government has promised to introduce new legislation on **pay equity**, which they indicate will remove the right of women public servants to make complaints about pay equity violations to the Canadian Human Rights Commission. The Government will limit pay equity legislation to apply only to federal public sector employees. Women need proactive federal pay equity legislation that applies to all federally regulated employers.

Clearly the government has failed to look at how Budget 2009 will affect women. This is a budget that ignores and excludes women, not a budget that takes women's lives and conditions into account; rather, it will contribute to further widening the equality gap between women and men in Canada.

SJSWC Partners With Crossroads Canada

by Lori-Ann Campbell

The Social and Political Action Committee of SJSWC met with Joan Campbell of Crossroads Canada on Feb 11th to discuss a partnership with the Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe. Crossroads encourages an exchange between feminist organizations with a view to giving each a richer sense of their own identity, while recognizing knowledge-building potential. Over the next year, we plan to use new Web 2.0 technologies such as 'You tube', 'Facebook', and 'pod casts', to pursue a partnership with the Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe, an organization that is composed of more than 40 distinct feminist organizations ... women who have been active resisters of state sponsored violence and are holding their society together from below.

While we live in different worlds, we do have skills and experiences that could be useful to each other. One particular skill, providing therapeutic counselling to children, was identified as one of interest to women of the Coalition. Overall, we feel that a preliminary dialogue will give both organizations a sense of what the other can provide, whether in the form of technologically mediated knowledge sharing, or in the form of a direct country to country exchange.

Got Milk? Film Review

by Gemma Schlamp-Hickey

Harvey Milk that is! ...the first openly gay person elected to public office in the United States...In the 70's, tired of being in the closet, Milk left a promising career on Wall Street and joined a gay exodus to San Francisco's Castro district with his partner. Together, they opened up a camera store, which fittingly became the focal and flash point of the gay rights movement. Frustrated by the lack of rights for gay people, as well as small business owners, Milk decided to run for City Supervisor and after three attempts, was elected in 1977. He served only eleven months before his assassination.

Gus Van Sant balances Milk the man and Milk the icon perfectly, exploring themes of gay sexism and stereotypes. For example, when hiring a lesbian as his campaign manager doesn't please Milk's gay supporters, Van Sant reveals a type of gay sexism that still exists today. It is interesting to watch how Milk objectifies his male partner in the same way that some straight men objectify their female partners, promoting the "housewife" stereotype set down by heterosexual "role models". When Milk's former partner asks him why he's with his current one, Milk responds, " ...after a long day's work I have someone to go home to who doesn't expect intellectual conversation."

With two Oscars to its credit, *MILK* is a must see. It's an important film because it documents gay history, which for the most part is a history still in the making.

JEERS

...to disappointing decisions, events and facts...

Joan Burke for removing four members of the Board of Regents of Memorial University before their terms of service expired.

Mike Milbury for his comment that discussion about outlawing fighting in the NHL will lead to the 'pansy-fication' of the sport.

Canada's legislators for our ranking at the bottom of 25 countries on UNICEF's report card on Early Childhood Education and Care Program.

Gemma, author of this film review is an out feminist, activist, political dyke. She serves on a number of committees and boards, but is best known for her role in getting same-sex marriage legalized in Canada. She ran as a candidate for the NDP in two provincial elections.

Gemma also says,

"Two thumbs up and a stiff middle finger to those responsible for the recent Proposition 8! This article is dedicated to Peg Norman. Three times a charm, Peg!"



Leslie having a CBC interview.

Leslie MacLeod Steps Down as PACSW President by Phyllis Artiss

Recently Leslie MacLeod announced that she will not seek a second term in office as President/CEO of the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women. Many women sent their thanks and well-wishes:

Michelle Murdoch wrote about PACSW under Leslie's leadership: 'No more back doors, we all enter through the front with dignity. These accomplishments alone develop an atmosphere of diversity and inclusiveness and set the stage for more time to focus on issues.'

Onar Usar, writing from York University, at the end of a long, bitter strike, spoke of Leslie's influence on her. She linked her own passion for social justice directly to a 'brief but incredibly powerful work experience' at the Advisory Council in the summer of 2006. '[Leslie] gave me my first job outside of the university campus at a time when I was feeling (as a queer, Middle Eastern/immigrant woman, and as a psychiatric survivor)' "I ain't nobody's sister."

Mary Shortall of the CLC wrote: 'You have made my work so much easier for me by your participation, analysis, knowledge, enthusiasm, level headedness, gentleness, passion, feminist principles, and above all your support, friendship and sisterhood...I can only hope, that whatever you pursue, it will involve us labour women working with you towards advancing women's equality.'

For myself, speaking as Council member throughout Leslie's term as President, I can attest to her tireless efforts to advance the rights of all women. She met women in their own communities. She was an active and outspoken participant in regional and national forums working for women's equality. She developed and maintained open and respectful communication with government, including the departments of Justice, HRLE, and Health & Community Services. She played an active role in developing legislation in issues affecting women's health, pay equity, housing, shelters, legal rights, including special resources for Aboriginal, immigrant and refugee women, and more. And I thank her for many acts of thoughtfulness and generosity to me and other members of the Council.

Finally, Gerry Rogers' posting sums up the responses of many when she wrote on the listserv: 'You have been an amazing, wonderful, wise, compassionate, feisty, rebellious, right on, fearless feminist leader...We have been so lucky to have you as the Prez these past 3 years!'

Montreal Massacre Film opens in Quebec Theatres



Public reaction to the movie in Quebec was decidedly mixed. Some wonder why the movie was made at all while others believe that the movie is necessary to ensure that such an event does not happen again. Whatever one's reaction, the movie generates discussion about women and violence, and that's a good thing. Je me souviens.

Girls & Sport

An abbreviated version of a brief on behalf of the Sport Advocacy Group to make Recreation and Sport Strategy for Newfoundland and Labrador (2007) a budget priority, presented to Minister Jerome Kennedy, at the pre-budgetary meeting in St. John's January 16, 2009.

My athletic experiences in school and community sport have provided me with the opportunity of competing in two varsity sports in two Canadian universities, to travel, meet wonderful people, pursue a PhD in the field, studying the social and cultural value of sport and physical activity for all. We know that sport and recreation bring significant health benefits. We also know that physically active children achieve higher grades in school, miss less school time, and are more likely to become active throughout adulthood than inactive children. We want girls and women, as well as men and boys, to have opportunities and choices for active living. One of the focus areas of the province's Recreation and Sport Strategy is girls and women.

When I researched young girls' participation in hockey in this province 10 years ago, I found them dedicated and enthusiastic. They were willing to practice late at night or early in the morning, and patiently wait until after the boys' playoff schedules were set for their final tournament to be determined. As young adults, many of these women would love to have the opportunity to continue playing this sport they love. But many cannot. There are waiting lists of women's teams wanting to participate in a senior women's recreational hockey league. If we want women in Newfoundland and Labrador to have such opportunities, the supporting infrastructure must be in place.

Current figures for female (under 19) participation in hockey suggest that approximately 1200 females are registered to play, whereas male enrolment is closer to 7000 participants. Once women reach 19 years or older their access to leagues and ice time drops off considerably. Young men, on the other hand, continue to have opportunities to play competitively and recreationally. What kind of message does this send?

Girls and women face a multitude of barriers that impede their access to and participation in physical activity and sport. Women from marginalized groups are even further alienated in some sporting and physical activity environments. While more and more young women aspire to be athletes we need to provide opportunities for diverse women to be active as well.

I press the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to fully implement the Recreation and Sport Strategy by committing financial support to human resource and infrastructure development necessary to increase participation and access to recreation, sport and physical activity for all citizens, including all women and girls, across the province.



LeAnne Petherick

LeAnne teaches at the School of Human Kinetics and Recreation at Memorial University.

Spokeswomen Committee

Sheila Keats (co-editor),
Glenda Cabot (co-editor),
Phyllis Artiss, Jillian
Freeman, Susan Vaughan,
Melody Morton Ninomiya

Hooking Our Lives: Women's Work, Women's Stories



This exhibit is a tribute to Sister Marie Ryan - a well known educator, counsellor, and feminist. Since October, twenty-five women gathered weekly to tell their stories - through the art of rug hooking. Each rug is original and tells of women's lives, the deep emotions created by selfless acts of compassion, strength and resilience, and women's on-going struggle for equality, social justice, and a violence-free environment.

Five Island Art Gallery
134 Water Street, St. John's,
March 3rd - March 28, 2009
Open Tues-Sat 10am-4:30pm

Meet the Artists:
Saturday, March 7th

PACSW: What's on the go? by Elaine Condon

The current **Advisory Council** completes its term in early March. Last fall, the Provincial Government issued a call for nominations for the Council and in the early new year advertised for the position of President/CEO. While all positions are open and some current members may be reappointed, we are anticipating some change in Council membership and, of course, there will be a new President. Watch the listserv for updates.

Phyllis Artiss is completing an astounding ten-year run as a member of the Advisory Council. Her contribution has always been insightful and spirited, and we shall miss her voice around this table. We look forward to other opportunities to work together as Phyllis continues her equality work in other forums. Thank you, Phyllis, for your commitment and dedication!

Not surprisingly, we are all busy with **justice issues**, both family and criminal justice. The Family Violence Prevention Act evaluation, the Family Violence Court pilot project, (in St. John's), ongoing issues with Family Justice Services and the resurfacing of Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods (SCAN) legislation have required research, analysis and discussion with Council members and community partners, and various methods of presentation to the Department of Justice. Currently, we are considering our response to the "Decades of Darkness: Moving Toward the Light: a review of the prison system in Newfoundland and Labrador", and working diligently to ensure that the SCAN legislation is permanently dropped. Copies of our commentaries concerning Family Justice Services, SCAN, and the Family Violence Court are available on our website, <http://www.pacsw.ca> or from our Office.

Our **listserv** has been in place for about five years, and we think it's time for an evaluation. The listserv members (currently 253 women) will be asked to help ensure that this tool is used to its full potential to meet your discussion and information needs. Over the next weeks, we will be designing and implementing a process for the evaluation. I take this opportunity to encourage you to please participate!

The Department of Justice continues the process of consulting with the public concerning amendments to the **Human Rights Code**. Sessions have been scheduled throughout the Province; those for Clarenville, Marystown and St John's are to take place from mid to late March. If you would like to make a submission or presentation, you are asked to call the Department of Justice at 729-2034 at least 24 hours before the scheduled session. Documents and submission form are available at <http://www.justice.gov.nl.ca/HumanRightsReview/index.htm>. Elaine Wychreschuk, our Policy Analyst, is currently reviewing documents and preparing a presentation on behalf of the Advisory Council.

Vagimons Never Fail To Inspire the Feminist Spirit

Every year, it never ceases to amaze me how the Women's Resource Centre (WRC) at MUN manages to pull off such vibrant and moving renditions of Eve Ensler's The Vagina Monologues. This year was no exception, as an eager crowd filled the D.F. Cook Recital Hall for another dose of vagina. The production was co-directed by Kayla Murphy and Ashley Reid, and successfully hosted by Aimee Wall, Kalyn Moore and Lauren Carroll, with the beautiful music of Dana Reid. It featured a tribe of uniquely talented performers, all dressed in attention-grabbing reds, pinks, and black.



The monologues brought everything from belly laughs to sobs. Highlights included Leisha Sagan's charming portrayal of a 72-year-old woman in The Flood, Sarah MacAuley's innocent yet mischievous performance of Coochie Snorcher, and an incredibly enthusiastic and hilarious rendition of The Woman

who liked to Make Vaginas Happy, by Samantha Sullivan and Victoria Neville. Leslie MacLeod, Kim Gill, Kelly Hickey and Karen Kerrivan were named honorary Vagina Warriors this year, for their extensive work and passion to help end violence against women. The beneficiaries were Iris Kirby House, the Native Friendship Centre and Libra House, while the 2009 VDAY spotlight campaign was The Girls and Women of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where it is estimated that hundreds of thousands of women and girls have been raped since conflict began there in 1996.

As always, there was the reminder of why we all gather each year to celebrate vaginas. The crowd was asked to stand, one-by-one, representing the 1 in 4 women who will be sexually assaulted in their lifetime, the you or someone you know who has been, or will be, sexually, physically, or emotionally assaulted. Each year we will gather again, and stand with open minds, hearts, and yes, vaginas, until the violence stops.



Jillian Freeman

RCA Theatre and She Said Yes! co-present the premiere of **The (In)complete Herstory of Women in Newfoundland (and Labrador!)**

Written by Sara Tilley
Co-Directed by Lois Brown and Sara Tilley
Featuring Susan Kent, Ruth Lawrence, Sara Tilley, Lois Brown and Craig Francis Power
The Majestic Theatre,
Mach 24-29th 2009

Three clowns take on the momentous task of creating a piece of theatre about the history – sorry, *herstory* – of women in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Contact: Amy House
rcat@nfld.net or 753-4531



Preparing for Bill C-484 Rally





SJSWC & WC Welcome New Board Members

On November 3, the St. John's Status of Women Council and St. John's Women's Centre (SJSWC & WC) held their annual general meeting. Among the agenda items was the election of a new board for the **SJSWC** (see picture to the left).

L-R back row: Elaine Condon, Lori Ann Campbell, Twila Reid, Cathy Russell, Susan Vaughan

L-R front row: Joanne Boone, Susan Shiner, Catherine Street (chair), Tammy Carpenter

Missing: Eileen Joe, Kathryn Jennex, Catherine Allix



Women's Centre Board

Jennifer Mercer (chair)
Joanne Boone
Cristy Hynes
Anne Kennedy
Carol Ann Saunders

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

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Council and Women's Centre**
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To:

Promoting the social, economic and personal equality of all women.