



AWARE



NEWSLETTER PUBLISHED BY ANTIGONISH WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Volume 2 Number 5 Resource Centre 863-6221-2 August-Sept. 1985

WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTRE RE-OPENS



Open House

On Friday, Sept 6th, the Women's Resource Centre hosted an Open House. The day was very successful with many people dropping in to chat, relax, and eat. Old and new visitors passed through the Centre that day. And thanks to the Antigonish Women's Association, excellent refreshments were served. The day concluded with laughter and conversation, not to mention the calories consumed! Now that the Centre has been re-opened, we hope that all members will feel free to drop in.

Antigonish Women's Association

Board Meeting August 1, 1985

Minutes:

This meeting was called to discuss aims and policies of AWA. Muriel Maybee, co-ordinator of the Second Story Women's Centre in Bridgewater, attended the meeting and told us about their Centre's work. Our discussion covered a lot of ground but centred around funding, working together to get stable funding, comparing experiences and stories. We ended with birth stories--which was probably appropriate. Even though in one sense, we've arrived; we've got a centre, established ourselves in the community and have a big group of talented and committed members, we are still at the beginning of the process and working hard to stay where we are. To move ahead we need to share knowledge with each other in our own organization and with other women's groups in the province. We need to refine our sense of direction--what do we mean to do in the next three years? We also need to spread the work and expertise among more of us. Right now the job of president seems overwhelming, perhaps because the job is not clear, and because past presidents have been so good. As more of us work on the board and with the centre, there will be more of us able to give a sense of direction, see clearly what needs to be done and to share in leadership.

These notes are not in order according to when they were discussed, but clumped together under ideas.

1. The approximately 8 women's centres in Nova Scotia will send representatives to a meeting with people from the Secretary of State Women's Programme in November. Hopefully we will be able to direct policy changes that would make our funding more stable and reasonable. Right now we are funded on different schedules--6 months--yearly--up to three years--and we are expected to be self supporting within three years. We all know how impossible a task it is to supply a service, run the organization and raise funds at the same time with all volunteer work. We've talked about starting a business to get enough money to run the Centre, but realistically, a business, even the work that goes into investigating one, will be a more than full-time job. We all have full time work or more at home or in the work force--where is this new energy to come from?

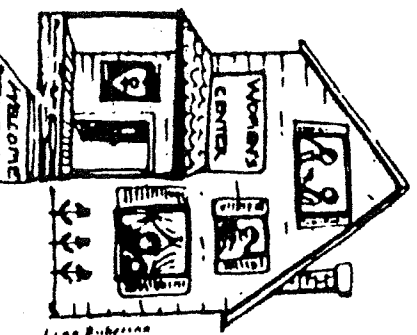
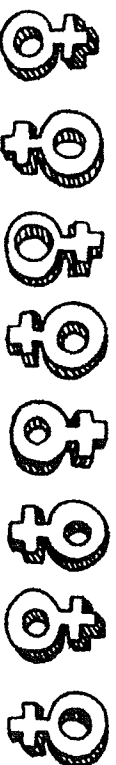
We need to do some preliminary work with the other women's centres to present our case to Sec. State, otherwise our whole time will be spent finding common ground and common goals.



2. We compared notes on working with our MP. Again it was noted how important it is to let our MPs (and our community agencies) know what good things we do and how they can help us in the work. A bad feeling on the MP's part, or simply lack of knowledge can be a major barrier to success. (The acting secretary is to write thanking Lawrence O'Neil for his letter of support in obtaining our present grant.

3. Second Story Women's Centre co-sponsored a GED and life skills course with the local adult education office. The course was designed to fit women's schedules and included assertiveness training, problem solving and time management training. Though Second Story did not make money on this, (it was, in part, a fundraising effort), it was well-received and furthered co-operation with the other agency. This is something that AWA could look into as we have the space, the talent and the desire to do this kind of work.

4. We talked about the differences between city women's groups and rural ones. Halifax now has no women's centre--though there is a lot of activity in the city, there is no one umbrella organization and no PLACE for women to go. In a city women don't have to worry about presenting an image of the "movement"--it's just there. There are enough people to form separate interest groups and to disagree to the breaking point over issues and priorities. Here we are committed to reaching out into the community. We have a very broad-based organization. Though we sometimes feel like we are expending a lot of energy just to stay alive--we survive intact. The negative thing about running in place is that we often can't lift our heads to see the broader picture--don't have the oomph to link up with our sister centres in the next counties.





A.W.A. Picnic.

Crystal Cliffs was alive with merriment and camaraderie the evening of August 14, when the women from Coady were hosted by the A.W.A. at their 2nd annual picnic.

Early arrivals had an opportunity to frolic in the invigorating waters of the Antigonish Harbour. Later everyone gathered together at the assembly hall, where we introduced ourselves. Then with the help of heaped tables of food we had a wonderful evening of conversation and song.

During the course of our discussions it was made evident that women of every culture share the same basic problems and that women can and do help each other.

The 40 women in attendance from the Coady Institute and the Antigonish area experienced a sense of sisterhood which rippled throughout the gathering.

Greetings from the Coady Women

1985

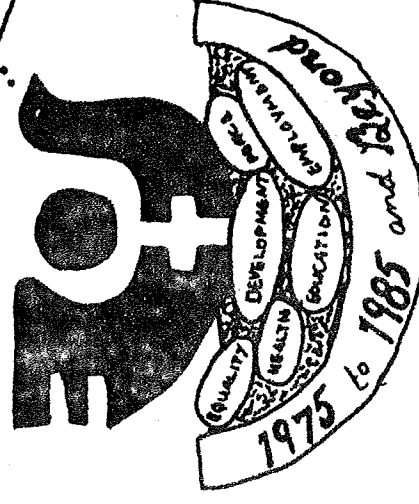
A warm word of thanks for all those who put the potluck together. We were very grateful to have been received by the Antigonish Women's Association. Coming together as a group brought a sense of solidarity. This collective gathering has given birth to further personal contact and friendships between the women from the Coady and those of Antigonish.

This type of get together is essential for building the network among the women of the world. We hope our meetings will continue over the next few months and into future years.

THE DECADE FOR WOMEN...

1985 and beyond...

*MATCH
BROWNS!!!*



To mark the reopening of the Centre, and the beginning of a new year of activity with Star Levatte O'Neil as our new co-ordinator, A.W.A. sponsored a public meeting. Angela Miles gave a short talk: "Why Would a Woman Be a Feminist" and opened the lively discussion that followed.

Angela's speech (copies will be available at the Centre) started by affirming women's traditional values--caring sharing and cooperation in the home and in the community. The dominant principles of society--individualism, profit and competition--leave service, care and cooperation in women's hands and push both these values and women to the edges of society in a subordinate and undervalued position.

Women in our culture have been viewed a "evil creatures of the flesh who must be controlled to labour economically for men if the devil was not to work through them." Later "women were seen as asexual angels, closer to God, bearers of men's children who must be 'protected' in a separate sphere from the harsh male world to provide comfort and diversion for men." In both visions women are defined by their bodies, not their minds "and they are seen in terms of men, if not a servant then a threat--good woman or bad woman."

In a selection of quotes from (male) theologians, philosophers and politicians, Angela Miles substantiated the "historically...deep misogynist (woman-hating) theme in our culture..A theme whose echoes we face to this day." A good example is Napoleon's: "Nature intended women to be our slaves...they are our property, we are not theirs. They belong to us, just as a tree that bears fruit belongs to a gardener. What a mad idea to demand equality for women!... Women are nothing but a machine for producing children."

"In contradiction to this mainstream tradition of trivializing and devaluing women, (and their human concerns), feminists value not just obedient and dependent women, but all women for their strength and reason and compassion as full political and independent people." Angela identifies the spirit of feminism as this love of women, this woman-identification. She sees this as the most deeply radical aspect of feminism in our society.

Women have strong self-images. They respect themselves as women. This self-respect extends to our friends and is not damaged by the negative stereotypes of the media and the powers that be. But we do view "otherwomen" as fitting the negative stereotypes. This negative view shows up in stock phrases we have all used--women are their own worst enemies--I'd rather work for a man, etc.--Angela maintains that "we value ourselves as exceptions to the norm of women," we are not like them." This inclination to value ourselves at the expense of seeing other women as different and worse divides

women. It hides the truth that much of our strength comes from the fact that we are women and that "other women" share this strength.

Feminism gives us an alternate vision that "recognizes women's particular strengths, concerns and activity." Feminists are redefining the world, breaking down divisions between good and bad women, housewives and working women (both, as Angela points out, do housework and child rearing without pay). Feminists see all women as exceptions to the negative images of women. Feminists see housework as hard, demanding, skilled and valuable work. Feminists see that "our best and surest support comes from our women friends who are not exceptions but representatives of the class of women."

Feminist vision "frees us to trust ourselves and our experience and other women and to discover what we have in common." Sisterhood enables us to work together for social change--which Angela cites as another key aspect of feminism--"collective activity toward a more humane society." Feminism is not only about equality in the world as we know it, but about changing this world to make caring and sharing its central principles. If this vision of a new world is to come about, "women must play a central role. And these must be women who love and support and respect women and therefore themselves." Feminism, in Angela's words, "is not an organization you can join or a set of rigid principles. It is not a thing, but is the process of women coming together, supporting each other and gaining strength to change the world. Feminism is women's way to participate in making history. In that sense it is both a celebration and a trust. And it is what we all make it together. That is why a woman would be a feminist and why so many are today."

The audience (50-60) was very diverse--old and young, feminist and non-feminist women, town and country women, widows, grandmothers, students, workers in and out of the home, black and white, mothers and childless women, AWA members and newcomers. All were committed to respectful and supportive dialogue among women on the social questions of our day.

The spirited discussion raised questions that call for a follow-up meeting. Sharing and supportive dialogue across such a diversity of experience, age and beliefs is energizing and hopeful. Thanks to Angela Miles and all who participated in the meeting.



THANK YOU DIANE !!!

For organising the Newsletter!

Bugging Pat to get it out on time...

With your keen graphic skills!

And exquisite sense of balance...
(carrying the pile of Newsletters,
glue, the box of Newsletter
graphics and kicking the door
shut at the same time).

For your speed and efficiency!!

PLEASE ACCEPT OUR APPRECIATION

AND THANKS...

the
Newsletter
must
continue!!



A
TRIBUTE TO

PATRICIA

BRENNAN-ALPERT

who has kept the Newsletter
going with wit and zest and
zany glee: with support and
dedication to Women's struggles
-- with humour and good grace
and with her ever present
generosity--of time and
energy!!!!

YOU

WILL

INDEED

BE

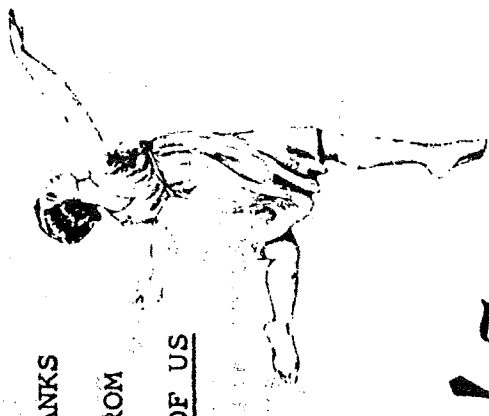
MISSED!!!!

Good Luck in Ottawa and.....

THANKS

FROM

ALL OF US



~ PATRICIA ~

A POEM FOR LORRAINE

When the time comes to judge
the quick and the dead,
we know where you'll be!

Your mind is quicker than your
tongue and your true heart,
quick to feel, quick to care,
makes the speed of light
look like a Sunday driver.

Thanks for your support and
enthusiasm! Best Wishes from
all of us.

Pat Brennan-Alpert.

In July, a farewell party was held
on Dunnes Beach for Lorraine
Chisholm. Many women attended from
various sources, AWA, feminists,
peace activists and dear friends.

The evening was celebrated among
women who support and nurture each
other, thus enabling them to have
a wonderful time.

In response, Lorraine placed a
thank-you notice in The Casket!!
She has moved to Boston and all our
Good Wishes go with her.

In her poem, Pat has succinctly
described the essence of Lorraine-
whom we hold so dear.

The Antigonish Women's Association is
for ALL women of Antigonish enables and
County. The Association needs other on
of all ages, backgrounds, to share each
strengths to work interests, to help and
common goals and experience, celebrate and
knowledge and for change,
other, work our lives.
learn about our lives. ***
The A.W.A. sponsors the Women's Resource
Centre (315 Main Street, Post Office).
Music Store, next to the drop-in centre, books,
The Centre provides a drop-in counselling, books,
meeting space, Call 863-6221/6222.
and programs.

ATLANTIC REGIONAL CONFERENCE OF RAPE CRISIS WORKERS.

On the weekend of August 23-26th, a conference sponsored by the Secretary of State was held for Rape Crisis Workers, at Point Prim, P.E.I.

The objective of the conference was to bring together workers who were involved in Rape Crisis Centres throughout the Atlantic Provinces, for the purpose of information sharing, education, training, support and soul restoring.

Facilitators from Toronto and Ottawa gave workshops and seminars on Feminist Counselling, Problem solving Techniques, Recruitment and Training of Volunteers and Public Education.

Information regarding The Canadian Association of Sexual Assault Centres(CASAC) was also provided for new agencies.

Each agency gave an outline of their work and how they were funded - what internal and external problems were encountered and how they worked in their communities. What became evident was that each community was unique and therefore had its particular needs, and a very diverse range of approaches was shared. This information was extremely helpful to all of us. Thus, the outcome was; be creative, use vision and imagination to solve problems and most of all share and network amongst our agencies.

The Spirit of Sisterhood shared was a source of nurturance and inspiration to all the women present with time out for fun and celebration.

Submissions to Pandora are welcome; send to

Pandora Publishing Assoc.

5533 Black St.,

Halifax, N.S.

B3K 1P7

messages: 902-455-1287

WOMEN'S CONFERENCE.

The conference will be held in P.E.I. on September 20th and 21st. The title is "Making the Connections", and the intentions are to explore the connections between family violence and global violence.

Workshops will include, "Women in the Community", "Images of Women in the Media". "Women in the Family", a supposedly safe place? One woman in ten is beaten.... One girl child in four is sexually abused.... "What do Women want Family to Mean?"

Women in the World.

The connections between Women's struggles here and those of Women in developing nations.

Any women who are interested and require further information, please call P.E.I. 892-3790, and contact the centre to connect with other women who may be going.

' Pandora '

At last a WOMEN'S newspaper!!! The first issue of Pandora is out, much to the delight of women throughout the province. It is a 24 page tabloid which provides women with an alternative to the mainstream media. Pandora has no single voice-no collective opinion and no editorial position. Each article submitted reflects the views of the women or woman who wrote it. Why Pandora? Many women wanted to know why it should be named after a discontented wife who could not keep her hands to herself and loosed evils on the world. But originally, Pandora was the first woman, sent down to earth with all-gifts. She brought forth every thing that was.

As an alternative to mainstream media, Pandora would like to provide access to those often denied it. It hopes to let the lid off experiences, opinions, news, that others don't often have a chance to see. It hopes to allow women to name their reality in a way that the mainstream media does not.

Position Available

Assistant ,Antigonish Womens Resource Centre

Job Description:

-to co-operate with the co-ordinator, on a part-time basis, with the over-all daily functioning of the Antigonish Womens Resource Centre.

to provide secretarial assistance to the Womens Resource Centre.

to oversee the distribution, collection and maintenance of the resource library, in conjunction with the co-ordinator.

-to meet the requests of the public in an efficient and pleasant manner.

Qualifications and skills:

- effective communications and human relations skills,
- the ability to react empathically and non-judgementally in various life situations.
- the presence of mind to react under pressure
- basic secretarial skills
- the ability to organize, plan and offer support help for programming where necessary.

Salary

to be commensurate with qualifications and hours worked

Hours

Part-time, to be arranged in conjunction with the co-ordinator.

Written resumes will be accepted at the Resource Centre until Sept., 25, 1985.

FEMINISM

Feminism is...not just the demand for women's equality in the world and the structures that we know. Nor is it simply the continuation of women's caring and sharing around the edges of this world. It is about the transformation of these structures and this world to make caring and sharing activities its central organizing principles. This is a tall order. But it is essential today when our world is threatened with destruction. If it is ever to be achieved women must play a central role. And these must be women who love and support and respect women and therefore themselves

Feminism is not an organization you can join or a set of rigid principles. It is not a thing, but is the process of women coming together, supporting each other and gaining strength to change the world. Feminism is women's way to participate in making history. In that sense it is both a celebration and a trust. And it is what we all make it together. That is why a woman would be a feminist and why so many are today. (From Angela Miles' speech, "Why Would a Woman be a Feminist?")

FLEA MARKET.

The Antigonish Women's Association will be holding a flea market in the near future. Members are asked to rummage through their attics to find materials for the upcoming sale. Thank-you.

BEDS IN DEMAND!!

A member of the A.W.A. is presently looking for furniture, particularly beds! If anyone has any extra furniture could they please call the Resource Centre. Thank-you.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

SEPTEMBER

- 16 "Behind the Veil" FILM To be shown in the Tin Room, Coady International Institute, at 6:30.
- 17 CBC Radio "Ideas": Women at Greenham. History of Greenham Common Peace Camp, protesting U.S. cruise missiles on British soil. 9:05 pm. Conclusion Sept.24.
- 21 "End of the Decade Conference", A report on the Nairobi United Nations World Conference on Women in July.
- 25 Stress Management Workshop begins: With Holly Irons at the Pictou County Women's Centre; to pre-register call 755-4647 or 752-4865.
- 26 Antigonish Women's Centre, volunteer gathering, at 7:30 in the Resource Centre. Old and new are encouraged to attend.
- 27 LUNCH TIME DROP IN: 12:00 to 2:00 Place: Resource Centre. Bring a lunch and join friends at the centre to eat and chat.

OCTOBER

- 3 TALK : Mary Clancy, "The Canadian Charter of Rights: Entrenchment of Equality", 7:30pm at the Jean Paul Centre, Main St., Antigonish.



NEW 'N OLD

In an attempt to become more self-sufficient and at the same time fill a need in the community, the AWA is appealing to its members to donate used books.

With your initial donation we hope to offer used books for sale and as we generate business to then be able to buy and sell books through the Resource Centre.

At the moment there are some books in the Resource Centre please come in and browse.

If you have donations call Diane Mackinnon 863-1407 or Star O'Neil 863 6221



Thanks to Barbara MacDonald, Angela Miles and Pat Brennan-Alpert, our library will include many new and fascinating books. With this new expansion, we are pleased to bring to you, new fiction, non-fiction and science fiction books. So for any of the people that find their personal library a bit thin, please come down and visit ours.

BEHIND THE VEIL

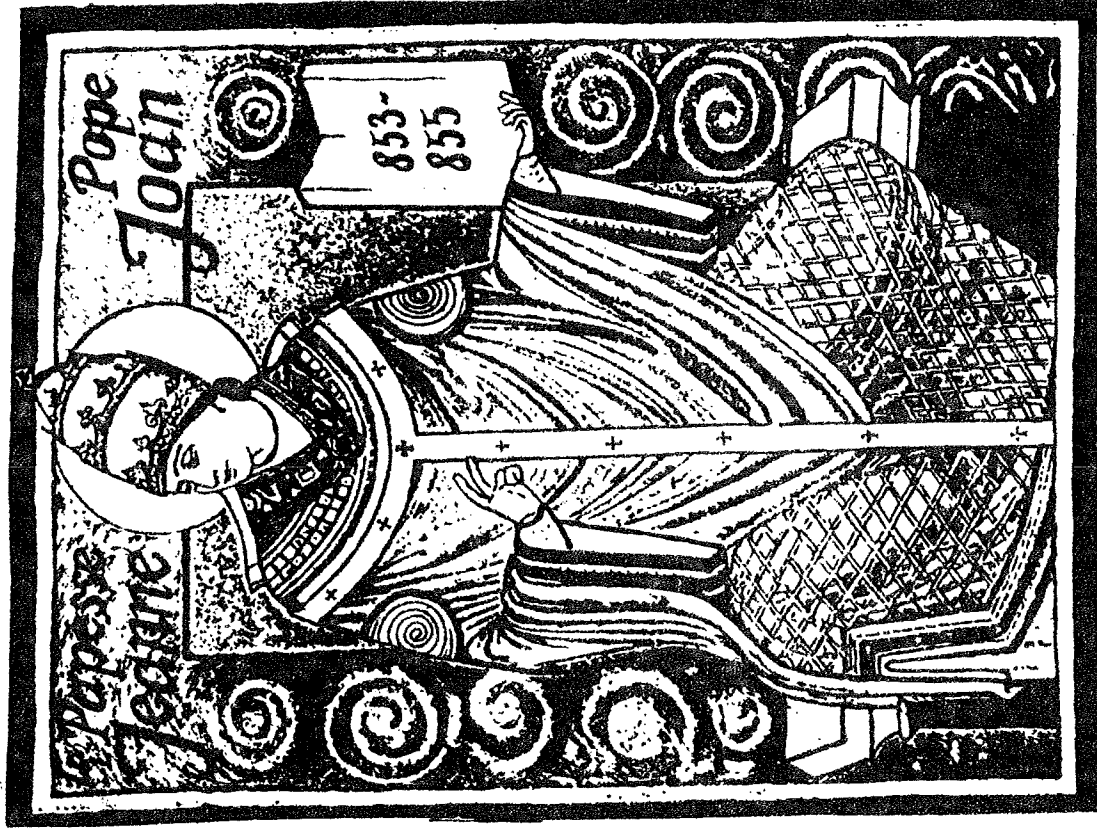
The new National Film Board production "Behind the Veil" was shown on Monday, August 16th at the Coady Institute.

The 2½ hour film traces the history of women and the church from the early times of the goddess religions which preceded Judaism and Christianity, to the contemporary role of women within patriarchal religion.

Through photographs of ancient drawings in the catacombs, records from women's monasteries in the 5th and 12th centuries, and interviews with women in the church of today, the enormous contributions of women committed to the spiritual life are re-viewed in a new and refreshingly positive light.

The message of the film, clearly voiced by Sister Donna Quinn, president of the U.S. National Association of Women Religious, is that "the church is in a sinful state, as long as it is sexist" and that we must all continue to work for equal rights in all sectors of society and in all institutions.

The exclusion of women from decision-making roles and the denial of women's valuable contributions in the making of our culture is no longer acceptable. Together we must work for change.



NOTICE

On Sept 24th, a day long INCEST workshop will be held at St. Martha's School of Nursing. Sponsors are the Registered Nurses Association of Nova Scotia.

Speakers are: Beverly D'Entremont
Director of Child Abuse Registry in Halifax.

Dr. Anne Bigelow

Professor in Psychology at St. F.X. Univ.

Deborah Y. Chansonneuve

Programme Manager, Naomi Society

Watch the October issue for the account of the workshop.

