

AWARe

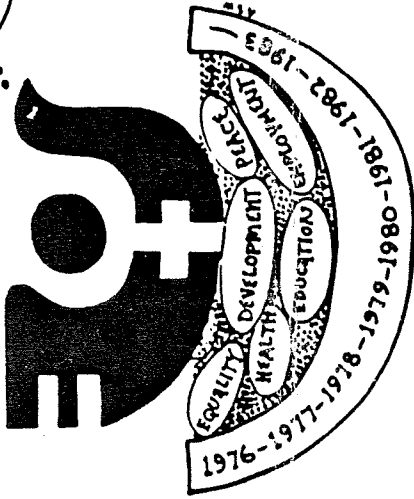


NEWSLETTER PUBLISHED BY ANTIGONISH WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Volume 2 Number 4 Resource Centre 863-6221-2 JUNE-JULY, 1985

THE DECADE FOR WOMEN... 1985 AND BEYOND...

HATCH
DARN IT!!



NEWS BRIEFS*****

This issue of AWARe covers May and June 1985 and a lot has happened in those two months. Funding for the Women's Resource Centre was approved by Secretary of State in May, Star Levette O'Neill was hired as our new WRC coordinator and has been working voluntarily since then. We got the money in our hot little hands late this month (June). The centre will be closed until August 19, but it can be used for meetings, etc. We will have a party with the Coady Women again, date TBA, and there will be the usual meetings and events during the time the Centre is closed.

Our members have participated in conferences and meetings: the NAC AGM, the Halifax Peace Conference and the Topshee Conference. Reports are in this newsletter.

The Antigonish Women's Association held our own Annual General Meeting in May, minutes are in this issue. Pamela Harris, a photographer from Ontario attended the AGM. She is travelling around the country taking pictures of feminists and feminist groups. Pam took photos of our AGM and went to houses of a good number of our members to take pictures. After all our talk about being or not being feminists, the final definition seems to be--if you consented to being photographed for a book of Canadian feminists, you are one.

AWARe will be running definitions and ideas of what feminism means in following issues. The first is Avon Burkholder's, below. Avon wrote this for an assignment in public speaking--a one minute speech. Short or long, please write up your ideas on feminism--definitions, reactions, visions. The feminist movement is being made right now and we are making it...there is no one right answer. Speak out!

Also inside are minutes from the June 20th board meeting, including new executive and committee heads. The results of the restructuring of AWA are summarized there. Enjoy the SUN!!*****

ARE YOU A FEMINIST?

Are you a feminist? "No" you say? Well then, do you have a mother? wife? sister? daughter?

The 'Living Webster Encyclopedic Dictionary' defines "Feminism" as follows:

"The doctrine advocating that social and political rights of women be equal to those possessed by men; a movement to acquire such rights."

In Canada, the majority of women and children living without a man are living in poverty.

Seventy-six percent of all women live without a man at some time in their lives. 6% never marry; 15% are separated or divorced -- 12% of that 15% have children. More than 50% of women are widowed.

These people are your Mothers, Wives, Sisters and Daughters.

If you are not a feminist, you are directly contributing to the poverty of the women you love most -- your mothers, wives, sisters and daughters.

Think about it!



JR/BSB

EDITORIAL

We were sitting in the office putting data into the computer when the secretary, Angela said, "When you ladies----whoops---I guess I shouldn't use that word." I remembered Betty saying that she'd gotten her wrist slapped for using that word, and Barbara apologizing for calling us ladies. So, I did some research. What's the difference between ladies and women? Why is it important? A lot of women I spoke with named the negative connotations of 'lady': helpless, hoity toity, more concerned with the state of her clothes and manners than with what's in her heart. 'Lady' and 'ladylike' are lacey and restricted, fragile and elitist. When we were told to be ladylike, it meant we were to keep clean, keep quiet, keep apart from the struggle and the dirty work.

In these definitions of 'lady', there's the assumption that some women aren't ladies and if you don't act like a lady, you won't be treated like a lady. Terrible things could happen to you, while you'll be taken care of if you are ladylike enough. A threat and a promise at once. However, we all know now that terrible things can and do happen to the most ladylike of women. Quiet, neat, well-mannered women are poor, alone, battered and over-worked, just as much as loud-mouthed, uppity women who wear flashy clothes and feed their children Kraft dinner.

Using 'women' instead of ladies breaks down the differences between us, for one thing. For another, it takes away the restrictions of being ladylike. Women can get their hands dirty, they can speak out, struggle for equality, peace, education.

Everyone I talked to also spoke of another use of 'lady' besides the negative one. And they always mentioned a specific woman along with the word who was a "lady in the true sense of the word" or a "real lady". Ella Manuel who's 70 years old and who is not racist or sexist, who is a gentle woman, one of the first recipients of the Persons award. Star's Grandmother and Aunt Susannah who had strong physical and emotional presence and the power comes from belief in the rightness of what they do. It comes down to context. You have to LISTEN for the meaning of words in conversation. You have to use the words that have meaning for whoever you're talking to. From Aunt Susannah 'lady' may be a compliment and be taken as a compliment. From someone else, calling you a lady may be a way to shut you up.

In another office, on the same topic...an addendum:

Both the terms 'ladies' and 'girls' have been widely used to trivialize the activities of women. For instance, sports writers refer to men's softball teams, etc., the same activity performed just as competently by women may be called powderpuff derby. 'Ladies' and 'girls' are used because 'women' is too strong. This usage reflects social attitudes and practices which have denied us full adulthood and the responsibility and competence which full adulthood implies. We must not forget that women have only been considered "persons" in Canada since 1929.

Sisters, I am trying...

Sisters, I am trying to find some answers.
We have worked so long now
To articulate our problems
To set some goals
To get some power
to achieve those goals.

O yes, a lot has happened
we have had
Women's Room, the Feminine Mystique
Northern Woman, Women and Environments.

we have had
meetings and conferences
delegations and representations
(and even here I complain because
the best known names are
Nellie McClung and
Margaret Atwood.
o Canada! there are so
many more!)
But that is almost an aside.

That alone does not explain
welfare mothers sitting in their own
group
at the conference, the bright
university people
just as alone on the other side of
the room.

no one
who dines more often on lobster
can possibly understand
macaroni or peanut butter.

That alone does not explain
the faculty wife's mistrust, fondling
her jewels and summer cottage,
comforted
at the evidence of her worth
all because she has that man,
calling down
herself as mother, volunteer, hatred
in her sidelong glance at the
university woman, who plays
in the big boys' playpen (where
that husband's rank is lower).

That alone does not explain
the twenty-three year old's
contempt
for an older one, who buys
her own perfume and watches
the big five-O coming fast, or
moving away on the bench in
a ViaRail station when Bag Lady
(running shoes in the snow)
tries to burn a cigarette.
O sisters, where is love? I am trying
so hard
to find some answers.

Friday evening Dr. Dan MacInnis gave an overview of the Coady movement--Masters of our Destiny: The Ideal and the Reality. In the 30's and 40's people came together in small groups around kitchen tables, determining their economic priorities and setting up organizations to help themselves. Today, there has been no significant growth in primary industries and there has been a loss of control by people who should benefit from them. Abroad, however, the Coady movement is still alive. Dr. MacInnis asked participants, "What are we here for? Shall we bury a dead movement? Or shall we carry it into the 90's?"

A panel representing labour, owners and producers, coops & Credit Unions and political democrats, generated plenty of ideas and a lot of enthusiasm for what was to come.

Saturday morning, Michael Parenti spoke on "The Political Economy & Obstacles to democratic Betterment". Parenti's view is that capitalism is a core problem for people today. He defined capitalism as using land, labour, resources and technology TO MAKE MONEY for those who own them. Job creation is not the goal of capitalism, nor is a better life or an improved environment. It is profit or go out of business. Parenti Views capitalism as an irrational system trying to solve rational problems. When people say no power relationships change. To overcome present irrationality, Parenti suggests: Educate yourself and others. Break down the feelings of isolation and powerlessness. Use available resources. Organize; state your case. And--when you win rights, exercise them vigorously.

Among the workshops offered was one for women's organizations. In the first session participants agreed that the guidelines for workshop discussion were irrelevant. So, we each had a chance to state our own concerns. As the 11 women present were representative of the maritime area, views reflected our geographic location. Our statement to the plenary session was:

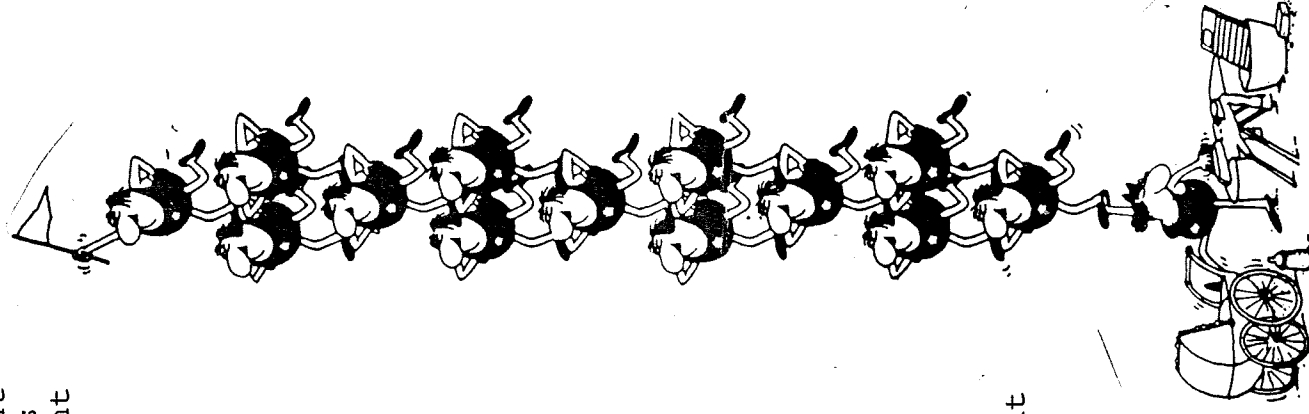
"Members of this workshop were intrigued and shocked by Parenti's speech. His definition of capitalism forced changed thinking. But where were the voices of women through last night's and today's sessions? We feel uncomfortable.

We say again, we DON'T have the power. Are capitalism and paternalistic oppression two sides of the same coin? Since a primary job of women is child care, why are there no child care services at the conference? This would empower women to participate.

In the organization of panels and speakers, why are there no feminist theorists side by side with those very effective speakers who have expounded the male point of view? Women's gains in status and rights are not complete. We still need definitions of problems from a women's perspective."

George McRobie, author of Small is Possible, was the second speaker on Sat. He advocates technologies which are small, simple, and capital saving. Appropriate technology would be non-violent to people and the environment. Instead of 'de-skilling' workers, he would see local economic development using local resources to meet local needs, resulting in self-reliance.

The second women's organizations workshop looked at specific concerns of participants. It was a larger group. Concerns: Role models for female students in non traditional studies-- Housing for single parents, affordable, safe and with provision for child-care--Total dissatisfaction with present child-care services--The working woman's ability to earn in low-salaried positions is less than it was 10 years ago. Her dollar doesn't go as far. She fears losing her job. Re-entry into the workforce is difficult after the child-rearing years-- (continued next page.)



(Topshee Memorial Conference, continued from previous page.....)

Parental home help-groups for mentally handicapped kids; parents are isolated, lack information and have no models for such groups-- Part-time jobs are a must for many women, yet they offer no benefits-- Canada Pension Plan must recognize home-makers, part-time workers and volunteer workers need pensions--In India, high tech jobs are going to men, replacing a largely female workforce--Women's centres could use small computers for information, networking, membership, etc.--Women trying to establish small businesses would benefit from a women's credit union & cooperative while getting their businesses off the ground--Women's networks are less visible today.

On Sunday, after Teresa MacNeil focused our attention on concrete actions which could be followed up in the next year(s), work groups met again. The women's organizations groups looked at two resolutions; both passed unanimously in the plenary session. The exact wording of the resolutions isn't available right now. The first concerned the need for child-care, not merely day-care, and the second concerned women's access to information relevant to their needs.

Personal reflections: By Saturday evening, the initial enthusiasm had waned. I felt very positive about the women's workshop, getting lots of feedback and sharing of ideas. But I felt a sense of hopelessness with the conference as a whole. When resolutions were being presented on Sunday, there was a palpable adrenalin high. People were working things out positively! My own life was affected immediately in the family and in the community. If a 3-day conference has such an impact over a week, what will the year bring?

Antigonish Women's Association

MINUTES

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

May 24, 1985

The Annual General Meeting of the Antigonish Women's Association was held on May 24 at 6:00 p.m. in the Tin Room of the Coady International Institute.

Approximately 20 people were present.

President Barbara MacDonald welcomed everyone and then asked each person to introduce herself. When this had been done Barbara gave the President's Report. Following the President's Report, Barbara gave an explanation of the Secretary of State grant for the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre.

Vicki Maclean explained to those present how the new structure for AWA Board meetings would work.

Avon Burkholder gave the Treasurer's Report.
Revenue - \$4,973.33; Expenses - \$6,103.78

Avon moved that the Treasurer's Report be accepted. Grace Mackinnon seconded. Accepted.

The Nominating Committee, represented by Vicki Maclean reported on old and new Board members. Board members who will remain are: Barbara MacDonald, Avon Burkholder, Janice Landry, Grace Mackinnon, Diane Mackinnon, Janet Tremblay, Madeline McGowan. New Board members are: Joan Corsten, Pat Alpert, Peggy MacNeil, Helen Sinnett and Star LeVatte. Vicki Maclean moved that the new Board members be accepted. Seconded by Avon Burkholder. Accepted.

Grace Mackinnon reported on behalf of the Social Action Committee. During the past year the Committee did a brief on pornography. Members went to Halifax and presented it to the Fraser Commission. In conjunction with this NFB film "Note A Love Story" was shown to different organizations and to the public, with discussions following. Both were accepted very well. A letter regarding pornography was supported by many local organizations and was sent to the Casket for publication. During the election, candidates were at the Resource Centre to answer questions; and the Committee went to Port Hawkesbury to hear the debate between candidates. Also, a women in poverty brochure was drawn up. Grace also reported that Lawrence O'Neill, M.P. sent a letter to Secretary of State endorsing the aims and objectives of the Association.

Pat Alpert reported on behalf of the Newsletter Committee. Each newsletter will have a different theme which will be publicized in advance so that people can send in contributions. The newsletter is a source of information and communication re concerns and educational opportunities.

NATIONAL ACTION COMMITTEE
ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Four Antigonish women attended the NAC annual general meeting in Ottawa in mid-May. Lucille Sanderson flew down early and Barbara MacDonald, Lynne MacLean and Pat Brennan-Alpert drove. The following is a composite report:

We started driving in a snow storm and there was still ice on the water as we turned west in Quebec. We stayed over night in Quebec City and after cafe au lait and croissants we made our way to Ottawa, where it was very summery. The woods along the highway were full of Trilliums.

About 400 women attended the AGM (annual general meeting), most of them were delegates from the 370 member groups of NAC (the National Action Committee on the Status of Women). NAC's membership has grown by 100 groups since the televised pre-election debates in August, 1984. NAC is the most powerful women's lobby group in Canada now.

I had read about NAC's work, seen the debates and used a lot of NAC materials this past year. I kind of idolized these women--Chaviva Hosek, soft-spoken and very effective--Louise Dulude, working on Pension reform now, and author of a great little booklet called Love Marriage and Money--Carol Wallace who wrote on Women and the deficit, encouraging women to get together and question economic priorities--Doris Anderson, editor of Chatelaine in its best years--Dorothy Ingalls, the moving force behind work against pornography in St. John's Newfoundland. I thought these women were some kind of heroes--smarter, bigger than life and different from us normal, regular women in Antigonish. On the first night, I stood in this room full of heroes, heard what needed to be done and felt overwhelmed and tired already.

The President of NAC, Chaviva Hosek, gave the opening address. She stressed how important it was to make a place for women coming into our organizations, to welcome them and give them something to do. She urged us to enjoy as well as tolerate the differences between old hands and those new to the movement, between women of different races, classes and ages. She stressed how important it was for us to cultivate a relationship with our local MP's, to educate them about our aims and what good things we do in our communities. She said that this government is more responsive to back benchers and work we do with our own MP's could have a great effect.

The first night we had a panel on the economy. The first speaker, Marjorie Cohn, said, "Men get nervous when women talk about economics because we focus on the irrationalities in their decisions," ie., 2 Billion is spent on incentives to oil companies while \$78,000 is spent on research into solar power. $\frac{1}{2}$ million dollars were spent on a party for Ronald Reagan, while churches must seek donations to supply food banks for the unemployed. Laura Ritchie said that women need to organize and unionize. Technology is erasing women's traditional jobs and changing full-time jobs with security and benefits into part-time jobs with no benefits.

I did some socializing on Friday night after the formal part and met two of my idols, Dorothy Ingalls and Carol Wallace. Speaking with Dorothy Ingalls is like standing in front of the fire on a winter night. You can almost touch the strong human spirit in her. Carol Wallace (who I pictured as a vogue model with a computer for a mind) was slight woman in a red dress, friendly as a neighbor. We talked about women and economics and her four year old.

Saturday we went to workshops on economic and social programs, meeting more women and learning more. By the end of Saturday, I was physically exhausted, but I had learned one very important thing: the "big names" are volunteers, just like us, with families and jobs and a need for sleep. What they know comes from the work they've been doing over the years. The 400 women on the floor, come from the handful of very dedicated women around every volunteer group and the dozens of hard working women who keep these groups going. That makes a lot of womanpower. When we were preparing for the lobby of the 3 party caucuses on Parliament Hill on Monday, the hour got late. More & more women drifted out until there were only 75-100 left to put the final touches on the questions. Well the revisions got done and done well. If there were only 10 women left, it would have been done well. What this said to me was--you and I can take a break, rest and come back--there are so many of us who share a common vision. We get the skills, from doing the work.

ANTIGONISH WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Minutes

June 20, 1985

Vicki MacLean presented her committee's review of the restructuring of the AWA board.

To increase membership involvement, quarterly meetings will be held: The AGM, a Christmas meeting and social, a summer event, and a social on International Women's Day.

The general membership will be encouraged to attend 2-4 board meetings dealing with policy, overviews and analysis. As well, the second monthly board meetings dealing with committee reports, & the resource centre will be open to the general membership.

To make the board's work more efficient, the board has been reduced to twelve working members. A chairwoman, not necessarily president or vice-president, may be elected from the board to run meetings. The working board meets twice a month, once for a business meeting and a second time to hear committee reports and matters pertaining to the WRC.

Committees have been reduced to 6: Finance (treasurer & 2 other board members) will create subcommittees to deal with long and short term funding. Management (president, vice-president and 1 other board member) will take care of the WRC. Newsletter will provide a communications link among board, committees, WRC and the general membership. Membership will keep the list and profiles of members up to date and will run the membership campaign. Volunteer organizer (not necessarily a board member) will manage volunteer efforts at the centre. Publicity will use media to publicize AWA events and work.

Focus committees include social action and outreach; they need not be headed by a board member, but will report to the board..

All committees are 1) responsible to report to the board and to file reports with the secretary, newsletter committee and the WRC. A binder will be kept at the WRC containing committee reports and minutes from meetings of the board available to anyone who is interested. 2) propose programs and ideas in writing to the board. When a quick decision is needed submit proposals to the executive.

Barbara MacDonald tendered her resignation as president of AWA.

Secretary of State funding has been approved but not yet received.

Janet Tremblay moved that we close the Centre from July 1, through August 19th and reallocate the money saved. Seconded by Dianne Mackinnon. Motion accepted.

Avon Burkholder moved that we accept Jim O'Neill's generous offer to do the books for the Women's Resource Centre. Dianne Mackinnon seconded the motion. Motion accepted.

1985 Officers: Summer Co-chair--President, Avon Burkholder and Vice President, Dianne Mackinnon. Secretary, Janice Landry, Treasurer, Helen Sinnett.

Committees 1985 Finance--Helen Sinnett, Grace Mackinnon, Peggy MacNeil. Management--Janet Tremblay, Dianne Mackinnon, Avon Burkholder. Newsletter--Pat Brennan-Alpert. Publicity--Madeline McGowan.

AWA BOARD MEETING

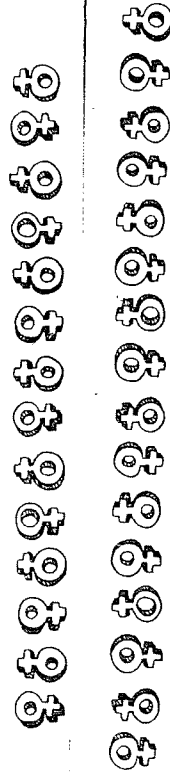
Minutes---July 4th, 1985---

1. Janice Landry will take a leave of absence for the summer. Pat Brennan-Alpert will fill in for her as Secretary.

2. Membership committee is working on gathing lists together and calling all members and all old members to update the lists.

3. AWA will have a table at the Downtown Shopping Mall, July 9&10th. Short term finance committee will call members for contributions of baked goods, plants, etc., and to get members to staff the booth.

4. Summer Event: We will have a firm date for the picnic with the Coady women be mid-week next week. It will be either the week of Aug 12th or 19th. It will be a potluck provided by AWA members. Informal music and topics for opening discussion were suggested. It will be at Crystal Cliffs. Those who come early can swim; supper will be around 5:30.

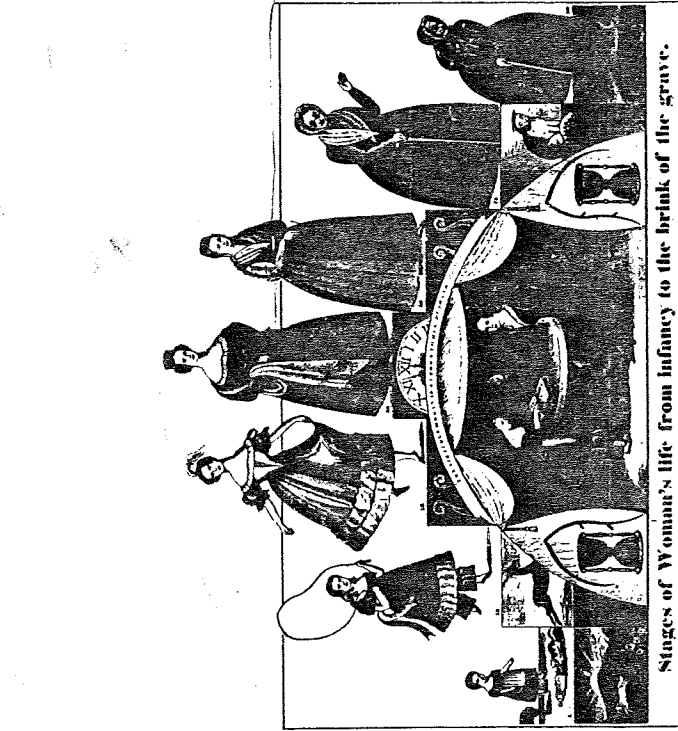


5. We will try to have a meeting all old board members to discuss aims and objectives, policies, etc. This will be held on Aug. 1 at 7:00 at Pat Brennan-A's house. Potluck again.

6. The Management committee has, with the new coordinator, Star Levatte O'Neill, drawn up a job description. It was moved and passed that Star be paid full salary for the time she worked voluntarily before the money came from Secretary State.

7. There will be a meeting with Cathy Mugeridge (tentatively on July 15th) to discuss budget reallocations necessary because of the delay in funding.

8. Janet Tremblay asked AWA to prepare to give input into a CEIC program planned for women re-entering the workforce after years of family responsibilities.



Stages of Woman's life from infancy to the brink of the grave.

IMPORTANT**NOTICE**IMPORTANT

We need Baked Goods, preserves, plants, knick-knacks, etc., for the AWA table at the Down Town Shopping Mall July 9&10.

Bring contributions to our table in the mornings of July 9th and 10th.

The Antigonish Women's Association is for ALL women of Antigonish Town and County. It is a way for women to work with each other on common interests and needs, sharing knowledge & experience, helping each other, working for change, celebrating and learning about our lives.

* *

The A.W.A. sponsors the Women's Resource Centre at 315 Main Street, above the Celtic Music Store, near the Post office. The Centre provides meeting space, informal counselling, books, programs and a drop-in centre. Call: 863-6221/6222.



