



AWARE

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SYDNEY CONFERENCE

For those of you who missed the Outside-Inside Conference in Sydney over the March 10th weekend, here is a taste of what you missed.

Sixteen stalwarts from Antigonish managed to beat the storm only to be snowed in the next day in an uninspiring motel. Despite all odds, we managed an inspiring time! The morning started with a great breakfast provided by an equally snow bound employee and her mother. Next it was massage lessons by Alma; a dismal attempt at 3-handed bridge (where were you Grace?), and an over-enthusiastic knitting spree by Avon which resulted in 3 extra inches of a baby vest!

After our relaxing massages we all managed to scale snow drifts and get to the Holiday Inn next door, where a conference room had been secured by the weekend organizers. Those resource people who had made it to Sydney presented capsulated versions of their workshops. Most women were pleased with this format as you had a glimpse at 4-5 topics rather than just the two originally assigned to you.

The Saturday night concert was held at the College of Cape Breton. Rita MacNeil wowed us all from 9:30 to 1:00 a.m. For those of us who had never seen Rita before it was an awesome experience. Never had we heard such a voice or felt such a presence!

Sunday morning workshops were also held at C.B.B. As some of the resource people never made it to Sydney there was some overcrowding as people shifted to different workshops.

A good lunch was provided and films and workshops continued in the afternoon. Unfortunately, many of us had to leave after the morning sessions.

Despite of and because of all the snow and confusion, 16 women got a chance to know and understand each other a little better. Words were said that shouldn't have been, that should have been, and that wouldn't have been but because they were, it made us all grow as persons.

SEXUALITY AND THE DISABLED WOMAN (Gwyneth Ferguson Matthews)

Gwyneth Ferguson Matthews, author of Voices from the Shadows and herself a disable person, spoke with directness and humor on the sexuality of the disabled, the attitudes of society towards disabled women, motherhood and the disabled woman, and the responsibility of disabled women to educate the public about being disabled.

WOMEN & HEALTH IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (Dora Carbonu)

Dora Carbonu, a nurse, mid-wife and educator from Ghana presented the workshop on women's health in developing countries. She explained the forces affecting women's health in developing countries and underdeveloped regions: availability of good water, customs of the culture, diet, childbearing, medical practice, family problems, and political problems. Ms. Carbonu illustrated her points with examples from her work in Ghana and in northern Canada, and an NFB film on a well-digging project in northern Ghana.

Ms. Carbonu's final message was that women, because they have the responsibility for children have a different point of view from government policy makers. With the world as it is, women must make their ideas known. In Ghana, women are more politically involved than we are here; their church groups, clubs and associations put pressure on government to consider the special needs of women and children. Dora Carbonu suggested that we should not be satisfied with potluck suppers and teas, "Meet, talk, make a resolution; let them know what you want".

The workshop ended in an exchange of addresses and information between participants. The feeling was that in Nova Scotia we need ways for women's groups to work together, get information back and forth, and support each other on issues of importance to us all. Suggestion included a province-wide newsletter with input from all women's groups, a letter writing night to support women's aims by sending letters to governments, Boards, and elected representatives on behalf of women.

The workshop was very interesting in itself, but I think Dora Carbonu would have made any topic lively and inspiring with her energy, conviction and optimism. (She was enrolled at St. F.X. but found it so lonely, especially at Christmas, that she transferred to Dalhousie -- too bad for us!)

FEMINIST COUNSELLING (Marjorie MacDonald)

This was the workshop attended by the majority of the Antigonish group. Marjorie MacDonald, the workshop leader, conducted the session by exploring feminist counselling as it reflected her professional and personal beliefs. The significant differences between feminist and traditional clinical counselling were discussed.

Marjorie encouraged discussion and was able to digress if the situation warranted without losing control over her topic. An enjoyable session but, alas, too little time for such an interesting and wide ranging subject.

A tape was made of this workshop and the plan (hope) is to transcribe the information and have it available at the Centre.

WELL WOMEN CLINICS - BACKGROUND AND APPLICATION (Heidi Atkins)

The intent of this workshop was to become comfortable with the "Well Woman Clinic Manual" and it included a discussion on the mechanics of well women clinics, all of which were to aid in assisting communities in organizing future clinics.

Rather than go into a report on this workshop, we will take this opportunity to inform you that Heidi is coming to the Resource Centre on Thursday, April 19th to do a presentation for us. We hope to see a lot of women in attendance.

RITA MACNEIL

The Women's Conference in Sydney on the March 10th weekend was certainly not unaffected by unplanned circumstances. Between the 'Great March Storm' and 'Murphy's Laws' (whatever can go wrong will...) most activities were either cancelled or rescheduled - with one important exception: Rita MacNeil

It is difficult to describe in words the experience of Rita MacNeil in concert, but certainly adjectives like "awesome", "soul-touching", "overwhelming", and "breath-taking" could be used and still fall short of doing justice to this remarkable woman. Rita makes you feel "at home" with her. Kicking off her shoes after her first song, she confides in her audience that she is really very shy and still feels timid getting up in front of a crowd. Her down-home genuineness and sincerity sparkle like rare gems among entertainers. Rita MacNeil's talent as a singer is magnificent. The power and fullness of her voice could knock down walls and her softness brings the room to a reverent-like hush. Rita tells us in song that she is not what she appears to be. She's right -- she is so much more! She exudes so much love and fullness of spirit through song that it touches something very deep inside. Many of her songs brought tears to my eyes, and as I looked around the audience there was a radiance on the faces of people spellbound by her presence.

Rita MacNeil is Magic, and her performance was truly an unforgettable experience - worth every snowflake that fell in the storm.

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MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

The AWA will be undertaking a membership drive next month. The aim is to promote the Association and sign up new members who will, hopefully, become involved in the Association. We will need help from the current members if this is to be accomplished. Please contact Barbara MacDonald at 386-2585 or leave a message at the Centre (863-6221).

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SUMMARY OF MINUTES OF ANTIGONISH WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION BOARD MEETINGS

FEB. 29: Secretary of State has informed us that some revisions are necessary in our application for funding. This has caused a delay and new funding will not begin until May 1/84. Therefore, for the month of April there will be no funds available for operating the Resource Centre. As a result, Betty and Oona will be on temporary layoff beginning March 23 and March 30, respectively. Betty and Oona have volunteered their services for the month of April and the AWA has committed funds for operating the Centre during the month of April. When the grant is received, the staff will be rehired. Fundraising has become a priority. We are in need of volunteers to help in organizing fundraising for the Centre. If you can donate some time, please call Oona or Betty (863-6221 or 863-6222).

MAR. 13: Fundraising, which is the most important issue at this time, was discussed at length. It was moved that a donation of \$25.00 be made to the Marie O'Keefe Memorial Fund at the Coady International Institute.

MAR. 21: A letter has been sent to Secretary of State from the AWA asking that funds which were allocated for the Centre for the month of October (which were not used and would have to be returned) be reallocated to cover April '84. This would cover the month for which we now have no funding. Volunteers will cover the two-week period that Betty is not available to work at the Centre.

Grace MacKinnon will be the permanent (as opposed to rotating) Chairperson for the AWA Board meetings.

Oona Landry reported on the activities of the Resource Centre. Next Board meeting will focus on the responsibilities and direction of the Board of Directors towards the AWA, the Resource Centre, and the general membership.

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NEW BOOKS AT THE RESOURCE CENTRE

Battered Wives, by Del Martin. This book looks at what keeps women victimized and offers guidance for victims of this crime.

Quilt, by Donna E. Smythe. A novel taking place in rural Nova Scotia about a group of women making a quilt and discovering the tragedy of a battered wife in their midst.

Women and the Crisis in Sex Hormones, by Barbara Seaman & Gideon Seman, M.D. "The best and most complete Handbook available on Menopause remedies and more".

Sisterhood is Powerful, edited by Robin Morgan. An anthology of writings from the Women's Liberation Movement.

Herland, by Charlotte Perkins Gilman. A lost feminist Utopian novel.

Ain't No Where We can Run, by Susan Koen, Nina Swaim and friends. A handbook for women on the nuclear mentality.

The Women's Workbook, edited by Patti Schom-Moffat & Cynthia Telfer. A handbook for working women - all women.

Solving Problems Together, by Illogie Wyckoff. This handbook presents a new self-help program designed to solve common problems that occur in relationships.

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A "FARM WOMENS' DAY" will be held on Fri., April 6 in the Boardroom of the Provincial Building, Antigonish. This will be an opportunity for farm women to get together and discuss topics of common interest. The film, "Plenty of Nothing", concerning the growing movement of women striving for legal recognition for their contribution to the family farm, will be shown and discussed. There will also be sessions on "Farm Loans and Insurance Needs" and "Emergency First Aid on the Farm". This workshop is open to all farm women in Antigonish and Guysborough counties. Day care service will be available. (Please let us know by March 30th if you require this service). To register and/or for further information call the N.S. Dept of Agric. and Marketing at 863-4705 or 4706.

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THE GREAT CANADIAN PARTICIPATION CHALLENGE - WEDNESDAY, MAY 16TH: A one day mass participation event. Just participate in any physical activity that makes your heart beat faster for 15 continuous minutes (e.g. walking, jogging, swimming, etc.) Participants simply register their participation with a central scoring office. The West Coast city of Merritt plans on being #1 - let's prove them wrong! Think about it! Everyone who participates will be a winner! Challenge a friend to participate!

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WHEN Conference - TRURO - APRIL 28th - beginning at 9:00 - 9:30 a.m.

A conference entitled "Women and Violence - Working Towards Solutions"

Workshops: 1. Women's Self Defense

2. Violence Against Women in the Home

3. Incest

4. Coping/Stress

5. Rape

6. Legal Aspects of Violence Against Women

7. Pornography

8. Additional Workshops (To be announced)

FOR A REGISTRATION FORM AND/OR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT THE CENTRE

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SINGLE PARENTS:

On Thursday, May 3rd, Lyn Cheek of the Social Services Department in New Glasgow will be at the Resource Centre for an information session at 7:00 p.m. She will speak about the Vocational Rehabilitation Program for single parents which will provide services aimed at enabling the single parent to develop the necessary skills required to be gainfully employed in the labour market.

Vocational training or re-training may be required in order to develop skills that are required in the labour market. The Department of Social Services will provide the services and financial support necessary for the single parent to participate in an approved Vocational Rehabilitation Program.

If you are interested in learning more about this program or know someone else who would be - pass the word along and plan to attend.

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RETURN OF THE TELEPHONE CHAIN

Once again, we hope to establish our telephone chain. This time however, it's been changed considerably!! Now, the names and numbers have been divided up by geographic location. This cuts down the number of names on the individual lists and, hopefully, it will enable us to share information, spread the word quickly about an event, and, most importantly eliminate the high postage costs.

When you receive a call you will be responsible for calling the next person on the list. If you cannot reach that person immediately please keep going down the list until you reach someone - this way the message will keep on the move. Then, later, you can try again to reach the one you were responsible for. With cooperation from each of you to take on this responsibility we should be able to have information circulated with a minimal effort.

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-----Tear off and keep close by-----

A P R I L E V E N T S

- 4 - Wednesday: "It's Just Your Nerves" at the Centre at 7:30 p.m.
An information session on the use and abuse of drugs, esp. minor tranquilizers
- 5 - Thursday: "Thoughts on Peace" at the Nurses Auditorium from 1:00 - 5:00
- 6 - Friday: "Farm Women's Day" at the Boardroom of the Provincial Building, James St.
Phone 863-4705 or 4706 for more information
- 9 - 13 : FILM: "Killing Us Softly" at the Centre Mon. - Fri. at noon hour and
Tues. and Thurs. evenings at 7:30
A startling film - really opens one's eyes to the all-too-typical
('traditional') ways the advertising media portray women. It's amusing,
maddening, mocking and frustrating - a great discussion starter!
- 17 - Tuesday: Discussion Night: "Working Mothers". This is held at the Centre at
7:30 p.m. and is open to one and all to come in and discuss and share
with others.
- 19 - Thursday: WELL WOMEN CLINICS: An information evening with Heidi Atkins. This will
take place at the Centre at 7:30 and we hope to see a good number of
people on hand.
- 25 - Wednesday: FILM: "Do I Have to Kill my Child?". This film will be shown at noon
hour and again that evening at 7:30 p.m.
This is a drama about the need to recognize and treat stress and depression
before they lead to child abuse.
- 28 - Saturday: WHEN Conference in Truro. "Women & Violence - Working Towards Solutions"