



PASSIONATE ABOUT WOMENS' ISSUES? HAVE WE GOT A JOB FOR YOU

Become part of the Rapid Response Team

Do you want to make a difference on women's issues? Are you comfortable commenting on public forums online, writing letters, or talking to the media? Then why not consider becoming part of the Lilies Rapid Response Team? We're seeking dedicated members who can speak to the media, the public and government on important issues in a timely manner. Tasks may include:

- commenting on online news sites and other new media forums,
• talking to the media or writing press releases,

- writing letters to the editor / government,
• sharing information with other networks.

Those who sign up to be a part of the Rapid Response Team will be helping to hold the mass media and government accountable.

If you would like to become part of the team, send your e-mail address and telephone number to the Prairie Lilies at prairielilies@gmail.com. Please specify the issues you are comfortable talking about (child care, politics, health, environment, etc.), as well as relevant skills you have (online networking, writing press releases, etc.).

FALL PROGRAMS

Fall educational: Women & politics

The current political climate in Saskatchewan and Canada does not bode well for feminist politics. In order to strengthen our resistance and our movement, we must solidify our understanding of the integral role that politics plays in shaping our society and structuring how women are viewed and treated.

With this in mind, the Prairie Lily Feminist Society proudly invites you to attend our next educational workshop on Oct. 8 in Regina (location TBA). The theme is 'Women and Politics' and will feature presentations by Dr. Joyce Green and Dr. Darlene Juschka, members of the Prairie Lily Feminist Society.

Joyce Green is a political science professor at the U of R. She focuses on Aboriginal-settler relations and the possibility of decolonization in Canada, as well as the politics of identity. Her recent publications include Making Space for Indigenous Feminism (Fernwood and Zed books, 2008), and From Stonechild to Social Cohesion: Anti-Racist Challenges for Saskatchewan (Canadian Journal of Political Science 2006).

Darlene Juschka is an associate professor in the women's and gender studies program and the religious studies department at the U of R. Her work brings together feminist theorizing, ritual and myth studies and the new phenomenology of religion. Among others, she has published Feminism and the Study of Religion: A Reader (ed.) 2000, and Spectacles of Gender: Enacting the Masculine in Ancient Rome and Modern Cinema (2005).

INCLUSIONS, EXCLUSIONS, SECLUSIONS: LIVING IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD

Women's World 2011: will you be there?

Women's Worlds is a global congress for and about women and women's lives, to be held in Ottawa-Gatineau, July 3-7, 2011.

The main theme of this congress (Inclusions, Exclusions, Seclusions: Living in a Globalized World) invites us to explore how women are reacting and adapting to the increasing interconnectedness of our world.

In communities everywhere, women are taking on the injustices brought about by globalization, as well as seizing the benefits. In doing so, paths are being paved for next generations to enjoy true and sustainable equality.

WW 2011 is a chance to shore up our collec-

tive wisdom to tackle a wide range of issues as they relate to women, including violence against women, health, education, poverty, security, spirituality/theology, culture/arts, war/conflict/peace, (im)migration, environment, economics, employment, political representation, sexualities, and rights.

The content and conversations of WW 2011 will name and celebrate this action in all its forms while showcasing the best of innovative research, critical learning, and women's leadership.

For more information, including the call for participation, visit www.womensworlds.ca.

It's time to speak up, speak out

BY NICOLE LEACH
PLFS board member

Recently, women's groups were advised by federal Conservative Senator Nancy Ruth to 'shut the f--k up'. This piece of advice was given to women who had been critical of the government's international maternal health plan, which excludes funding for safe abortion services.

Some might view the words uttered by Nancy Ruth as a warning, but the Prairie Lily Feminist Society view her words as a call to action. Now is the time to speak up for women's rights; now is the time to act.

To assume that by staying silent and not speaking up or questioning or critiquing the government it will save women's advocacy groups is erroneous. Those with a much more rounded view of Canadian history understand that staying silent has never protected women's rights.

It was because women collectively raised their voices and challenged the status quo that women were in 1929 legislatively named as persons. Prior to that, Canada's constitution — still the British North America Act at this point — stated one must be a "person" to serve in the senate. In 1928, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that when the BNA Act was written in 1867, the term "person" was not meant to include women, only men. Nellie Mc-

Clung, Irene Parlby, Louise McKinney and Henrietta Edwards challenged this all the way to the Judicial Committee of the British Privy Council. In October 1929, the committee ruled that Canadian women were, in fact, persons and could be appointed to the senate.

This is just one example of women refusing to stay silent.

We often hear that the women's movement has been in a bit of a lull since the heyday of the second wave feminist movement. If this is true, then the fact that numerous women's groups have seen their budgets slashed and programs cuts in the last decade suggests that lowered voices do not protect women's rights. This is why at this time of the hour (half past economic crisis and quarter to possible ecological breakdown) it is imperative for us to raise our voices.

Even if Harper's decision to not fund abortion through the G8/G20 maternal health plan is not intended to be Harper's way of 'opening the debate on abortion', as some have claimed, it is at the very least a way to cut vital social spending. The sad truth of the matter is that Canadian governments slash social spending during recessions. This world recession, that Saskatchewan is not immune to, is going to be carried out on the backs of marginalized communities and this includes women.

We must stand in solidarity and raise our voices against this continued assault on women's rights.



Honour & Give: A tribute to 100 years

An event to remember for the next 100 years

BY LARISSA SHASKO

This year marked 100 years of International Women's Day. To mark this special occasion, the Prairie Lily Feminist Society held a gala celebration on March 6 with guest of honour and keynote speaker Buffy Sainte-Marie. The event was a tribute to women's leadership and a celebration of the efforts and achievements of those who have worked, and those who continue to work, to make the world a better place.

Just walking into the packed room that night, I felt a growing sense of excitement. Sounds of laughter and conversation created a welcoming atmosphere, and everywhere I turned, I ran into someone from the community I knew or recognized. The entire room looked amazing, and the tables were beautifully decorated with vases of lilies and art by the children from the Regina Early Learning Centre. I felt a special pride to know that everyone in the room was there to honour our foremothers and sisters and to give to those who are actively building a secure future for our daughters and sons.

There was plenty for more than 500 guests to do as we awaited the start of the evening's festivities. The silent art auction featured an amazing collection of fine art with many of the pieces donated by local artists. Thanks to the generosity of those in attendance, \$2,500 was raised for the Regina Early Learning Centre from the auction proceeds. The 100 women, 100 years digital photo gallery put on by the University of Regina Women's Centre added so much to the atmosphere of the evening. It was almost like having all 100 of those amazing women right there in the room with us. There were also petitions to sign, a penny parade to peruse, and plenty of conversations to be had.

And then there was Buffy.

It was hard not to feel a bit starstruck as Buffy Sainte-Marie walked around the room saying hello and offering hugs to those in attendance. She truly beamed with beauty that night.

The supper was delicious, from the salad to the cheese-cake. The prayer offered by elder Betty McKenna started the evening off with a wonderful feeling of solidarity and respect for one another. The supper staff from Evraz Place,



members of Retail, Wholesale Department Store Union, did an amazing job of accommodating extra guests. Two weeks before the event was held, the board of the Lilies were concerned that not enough tickets had been sold, but by the day before the event, it was not only sold out, but extra tickets and tables were needed to meet last minute requests!

Everyone did a fabulous job that night. The warmth offered by Barb Byers, the sister of ceremony for the evening,

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

AGM highlights

The 2010 Prairie Lily Feminist Society annual general meeting was held April 24 at the University of Regina. The meeting was a valuable opportunity for socializing, networking, planning and learning. Cara Banks reported on some highlights on behalf of the board, concluding with a report on IWD fundraiser, "Honour & Give: A Tribute to 100 Years of International Women's Day" with keynote speaker Buffy Sainte-Marie.

The Lilies membership is growing. Feminism is alive and well in Saskatchewan! In the coming year, the Lilies committed to continuing to work on the issues of missing women in Saskatchewan and reproductive rights. They will also hold two more educational sessions on the topics of women and health and women and politics.

The Lilies held a roundtable, where we heard reports and announcements from our sisters at the Canadian Labour Congress, the Early Learning Childcare Coalition, Amnesty International, and the Saskatchewan Women's Network. This feminist networking was a great way to learn about important issues and ways we can work together. Membership forms, petitions, and informational handouts were circulated in abundance.

Following lunch, sisters Marianne Hladun and Carol Cisecki, from a Saskatchewan organization called Nashi, spoke about the work they are doing in the Ukraine to stop human trafficking of young people.

Nashi has been working to build a transition house in the Ukraine for children who have no place to go and may otherwise become victims of human trafficking. They hold fundraising events in Saskatchewan such as their annual Perogy Paradise to raise money for the work they are doing in the Ukraine, and members of the group have visited the Ukraine



Carol Cisecki, Jennifer Britton and Marianne Hladun educated the Lilies about human trafficking in Ukraine and in Canada.

to work on the ground and to take part of building solutions first-hand.

It was an eye opening and moving presentation. The Lilies then took on the task of discussing how we can organize around the problem of human trafficking both internationally, and here in Saskatchewan.

More information about Nashi can be found on their website at www.nashi.ca.

Thanks to Marianne and Carol, both members of the Lilies, for traveling from Saskatoon to educate us. Thanks also to Jennifer Britton, a member of the Lilies, who gave a presentation about human trafficking in Canada.

TAKE ACTION NOW TO SAVE THE LONG GUN REGISTRY

Gun laws are saving women's lives

In Canada, 65 percent of female murder victims are killed by their intimate partners. Most are killed in their own homes.

An Ontario study of domestic violence found that possession or access to a firearm was the fourth most serious risk factor after marriage breakup, depression and a history of domestic violence.

With strong public pressure and women's activism following the tragic events at the Ecole Polytechnique in Montreal on Dec. 6, 1989, Canada adopted stricter gun control regulations in 1991 and introduced gun registry legislation in 1995. The new laws strengthened controls on rifles and shotguns, requiring registration and strict regulations on the storage of long guns. Since 1991, the homicide rate with firearms (including handguns) in Canada is down by 40 percent and the homicide rate with rifles and shotguns plummeted by 70 percent. The number of women murdered by guns fell from 85 in 1991 to 24 in 2004.

Contact Your member of Parliament and ask them to vote against Bill C-391.



AMENDMENTS TO MARRIAGE ACT CHALLENGED

Lilies go to the Court of Appeal

The Prairie Lily Feminist Society, along with the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour solidarity and pride committee and members of the GLBT community, recently made arguments to the Court of Appeal regarding the Marriage Act.

The Wall government wants to change the Act, and asked the court to decide whether or not it was a violation of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to allow government-appointed marriage commissioners to refuse to marry same-sex couples if it offended their personal religious beliefs.

The Lilies argued that allowing public servants to refuse services to citizens is discriminatory and a violation of the equality section of the charter. Section 15 states that laws cannot discriminate against groups in society based on their gender, race or other characteristics such as sexual orientation.

A big thank you goes out to Larry Kowalchuk for arguing the case pro bono. Donna Smith, a member of the Lilies and the solidarity and pride committee, co-ordinated the challenge. She brought our team together, worked on arguments, and assisted members of the GLBT community in getting their stories put before the court. Thank you, Donna, for your commitment and your activism!



CHILDCARE ROUNDUP

Introducing kidSKAN

Over 60 people gathered at Queensbury Convention Centre in Regina to learn about what is going on in early childhood development around the country. Participants at this kidSKAN event included, RIC coordinators, UYEY consultants, speech and language pathologists, educators, advocates, childcare providers, directors, teachers and students.

kidSKAN was introduced as a community of practice model, which is "a group of people who share a concern or passion for something they do, and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly".

An overview of what is going on across Saskatchewan was presented by Sue Delanoy, special projects coordinator, Child and Youth Friendly Saskatoon. Fleur Macqueen Smith, research and knowledge transfer officer, SPHERU, presented ideas around her early childhood development research, "when we know more, we do better". Debra Mayer, an early childhood consultant from Manitoba, talked about using communities of practice to bridge divides leading to policy change.



Coalition launches website

The Prairie Lily Feminist Society proudly sponsored the recent launch of the Early Learning Childcare Coalition of Saskatchewan's website.

On May 12, members, parents, advocates and politicians gathered to celebrate the launch of the ELCC website. The event energized the coalition with a renewed sense of place in the province.

The ELCC advocates for a strong family policy that includes public funding and delivery, accessibility, integrated system, and worthy wages and benefits for childcare workers.

Please visit the site at www.elccoalition.ca.

A special thank you to the Canadian Union of Public Employees for hosting the website and Ian Clysdale for bringing the website to life.



of International Women's Day



Guest speaker Buffy Sainte-Marie (middle, with Prairie Lily board) gave a memorable speech and gave everyone something to think about.

reminded us how important and significant it was that we were there to honour 100 years of International Women's Day. International Women's Day is a day for celebrating women's achievements in creating a more just and fairer society. To look back at the accomplishments of the women's

movement over the past 100 years is remarkable, especially for someone born in the early 1980s!

But for me, honouring 100 years of IWD was also about what the next 100 years has in store for feminist activists, not only here in Saskatchewan, but all over the world. They say the next wave of feminism will come from the global south, and for all of our sisters who live a world away, I could have no greater wish than to see that come to fruition.

For all of us feminists here, we certainly have our work cut out for us over the next 100 years as well. Yes, we have a lot to celebrate about how values have changed here in the past century in regard to women's rights, but we also have huge problems that need to be addressed, from inadequate childcare spaces and funding, to human trafficking, to our missing and murdered Aboriginal sisters. There are many of us in this province who have decided to give back to our communities and children by working on solutions to the many challenges the women of our province face. That is what the Lilies are all about. Thanks to the success of this event, the Lilies are already planning the next 100 years of work ahead of us!

When Buffy spoke, she lit up the entire room. She made us laugh and think, and she gave us an evening of entertainment (even without singing.) Although Buffy's IWD message contained far too much essentialism for many of the feminists in the room, I was able to take her message as a gift because of the laughter it brought to the room.

With every message comes an opportunity for learning, and sometimes the best opportunities come from messages that we can critique and leave parts of behind if they are not our truths. I was grateful to have Buffy and her wonderful spirit there with us, and I beamed with pride when she declared, "the Lilies have one more member now!"

The fundraiser was a huge success and the Prairie Lily Feminist Society now has some resources to continue the work of movement-building. We hope to make an impact in the lives of women in this province, now and over the next 100 years.

Thank-you to the board of the Prairie Lilies and all those volunteers and funders who made it happen.

For all of us feminists here in Saskatchewan, we certainly have our work cut out for us over the next 100 years.

Harper attacks women's programs

As you can tell by our newsletter the Prairie Lilies have been very busy this year, but we were not the only ones. Our federal elected officials also had a very busy year. They slashed women's organizations funding and cut various women's programs. They also introduced sexist and racist legislation into the House of Commons. In fact, the Harper government has been busy for a few years now. This is a sample of what they've been up to:

THE INTRODUCTION OF BILL C-3 IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

Status:

- Still on parliamentary agenda despite its many flaws; such as, instead of remedying the sex discrimination in the status registration provisions of the Indian Act, Bill C-3 continues to disadvantage descendants of Aboriginal women when it comes to transmitting status.

For more information:

- Joyce Green and Shelagh Day's article "Sexist Bill C-3 is Racist and Fatally Flawed" online at www.rabble.ca/news/2010/05/indian-act-remedy-bill-c-3-flawed

NATIVE WOMEN ASSOC. OF CANADA'S SISTERS IN SPIRIT

Status:

- The Canadian government has slowed down their funding for NWAC's Sisters in Spirit initiative. Funding for Sisters in Spirit expired in March of this year and there is still no word yet as to whether funding will be renewed or be increased. On April 14, Sisters in Spirit added 62 new names to the 521 cases of missing or murdered native women and girls.

For more information:

- The Sisters in Spirit website at www.travel-net.com/~nwacweb/en/background.html.

THE ABORIGINAL HEALING FOUNDATION

Status:

- The government has yet to renew funding for the Aboriginal Healing Foundation. Discontinued funding has left 134 foundation-funded healing projects across the country without the means to continue operating. Many organizations were forced to close their doors as of March 31.

For more information:

- The Aboriginal Healing Foundation at www.ahf.ca.

FIRST NATIONS UNIVERSITY OF CANADA

Status:

- In February 2010, the federal and Saskatchewan governments pulled over \$12 million in funding from the university. The province's share of \$5.2 million has been restored, but the federal government has only committed enough further funding to keep

FNUC operative until March 31, 2011, and has not committed to the long-term core funding that students have been asking for.

For more information:

- Stephan Larose's article "The tragedy of the First Nations University of Canada" online at www.rabble.ca/news/2010/04/tragedy-first-nations-university-canada

COURT CHALLENGES PROGRAM

Status:

- As of Sept. 2006, funding for this national non-profit program set up to provide financial assistance for important court cases regarding language and equality rights guaranteed in Canada's constitution has been terminated.

For more information:

- The Feminist Alliance for International Action's "Save Court Challenges" media release online at www.fafia-afai.org/en/node/365#press

STATUS OF WOMEN CANADA

Status:

- In 2006, the Harper government cut \$5 million from SOWC's budget, eliminated the word 'equality' from its mandate, replacing it with 'participation', and insisted that SOWC stop funding lobbying and research.

For more information:

- Kathleen O'Grady's article "Status of Women Canada Cuts a Loss for Healthy Democracy: Grassroots organizations play an instrumental role in government accountability and contribute to healthy public policies" online at www.cwhn.ca/en/node/39454

Recently, the Harper government cut funding to:

- Match International,
- Womanspace Lethbridge,
- The New Brunswick Pay Equity Coalition,
- The Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women,
- Conseil d'intervention pour l'accès des femmes au travail,
- Réseau des Tables régionales de groupes de femmes du Québec,
- The Alberta Network of Immigrant Women,
- Centre de documentation sur l'éducation des adultes et la condition féminine,
- Association féminine d'éducation et d'action sociale,

- The Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses,
- The Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation,
- Feminists for Just and Equitable Public Policy in Nova Scotia,
- The International Planned Parenthood Foundation.

This long list of groups have all had substantial funding cuts in the last few months. Hopefully by sharing this information and highlighting these issues, we may be able to stand in solidarity with our sisters and support each other and our struggles.

It is time we demonstrate that we are willing and ready to speak up and speak out about these human rights abuses and this attack on women's rights.



NEW RULES HIT HARD

Province pulls funding for community groups



The provincial government has recently changed the rules for community-based organizations and other social service organizations.

Previously these groups were able to lease used government vehicles. As a result of the March 2010 budget, they have lost their vehicle lease privileges.

Organizations affected include:

- transition houses,
- childcare centres,
- mental health associations,
- learning centres for people with disabilities,
- programs for Aboriginal youth,
- housing authorities,
- mobile crisis and addiction centres,
- organizations for immigrants,
- programs for those transitioning out of the justice system.

For many of these groups, transportation of the clients and members of the community is a core part of their programming.

Childcare organizations across the province also had their project funding cut in the Wall government's 2010 budget. Community Solutions grants previously provided funds on an individual project basis.

Some of the projects included:

- block funding for three childcare spaces for respite for families in crisis,
- support services including counseling,
- parenting classes,
- food bank referrals for families,
- funding to improve pre-school and toddler programming,
- in-home childcare for rural farm families during peak farming periods.

The grants were cancelled in the budget, slashing \$447,000 from childcare centres in Meadow Lake, North Battleford, Saskatoon, Oxbow, Regina, and Shaunavon.