



The Ontario Committee on the Status of Women

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VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Violence against women is not taken seriously in our society, is often perceived as a sexual turn-on (primarily for men) and influences myriad aspects of our daily lives.

Violence against women is the topic of discussion at the next OCSW meeting, Wednesday, March 2, 8:00 p.m. at the home of Chaviva Hosek, 152 Cambridge Avenue, 463-2822, north and west of the Danforth and Broadview subway stop. Guest speaker is Trudy Don.

Trudy is the first co-ordinator of the association of transition houses in Toronto. She is a member of the staff of Interval House, the first such resource in North America for women fleeing domestic violence.

She will explore with OCSW members a societal and historical analysis of wife-battering and other forms of violence against us. To accomplish this, we shall examine some of the myths about women still current, such as: Women must like such treatment or they wouldn't stay with men who beat them.

Trudy will discuss also the characteristics of men who abuse their partners.

From the physical injuries inflicted on women's bodies to the wounds inflicted on our spirit and self-image by sexist films and literature is but a short step. Join the discussion on this all-encompassing issue on March 2.

PORNOGRAPHY: HOW IT AFFECTS WOMEN'S LIVES

is the subject of a day-long discussion to be held on Saturday, March 12, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber, Toronto City Hall. Call Joanne Cooper, YWCA Metro Toronto, 961-8100, or Lee Grills, 488-1486, for more information. Cost will be approximately \$5 per person.

ONTARIO FAMILY LAW REFORM ACT

OCSW has been actively involved in Family Law reform since 1971 and submitted a Private Citizen's Bill, called Bill 50/50, in March 1978.

On February 4, 1983, OCSW members Irma Melville and Lee Grills presented to the Ontario Status of Women Council what is primarily a re-statement of the items covered in previous documents. This re-statement was necessary as "family" and "non-family" assets are under discussion once again. The philosophy of current legislation--that responsibility for child care, housework and financial support should be equally shared by both spouses--was not achieved.

After almost five years' experience with the legislation, the resulting decisions lead to many concerns. If the integrity of the law is to be preserved, Ontario family law reform must be reviewed and amended.

The discussion was lively and the questions good. Lee and Irma report that OCSW will

Tuesday, March 8, is International Women's Day

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continue to follow the issue to see what recommendations are made by the Council to the government.

As Nellie McClung wrote in Times Like These: "Chivalry is a poor substitute for justice."

FAMILY BENEFITS WORK GROUP

The FBWG will hold its annual general meeting, Saturday, February 26, 519 Church Community Centre, 1:00 p.m.

TEENS' DIRECTOR FROM YWCA AVAILABLE

For teenage women, aged 16 to 21, who have left home because of the economic squeeze or abuse--sexual, emotional or physical--the YWCA has published a new resource directory entitled "On Your Own". It is aimed at youngsters who have no experience with the existing social service network. The Directory lists hostels, medical, legal and counselling services plus lots more. They are available for a nominal fee from the YWCA, Resource Development Department, 80 Woodlawn Avenue East, Toronto, M4T 1C1, 961-8100.

NEW WOMEN'S STUDIES PROGRAM AT MUN

Memorial University, Newfoundland, now has an official Women's Studies program being offered for the first time this semester. The introductory course, Women's Studies 2000, is interdisciplinary, serves as a starting point for this new minor program and will be offered during lunch time.

WOMEN ARTISTS TO PRESENT WORK

Women's Perspectives '83 is a show for artists in all media--painting, sculpture, graphics, performance, etc.--to express their concerns as women. It will be on display in May at Partisan Gallery, 2388 Dundas Street West, Toronto, a non-profit, artist-run centre that has presented many exhibitions both reflecting and serving community interests.

Partisan plans Women's Perspectives '83 to be a full program of music, dance, storytelling, forums and events specific to issues such as violence against women, women and peace, achievements and heroines, women and work and others.

Partisan is looking for endorsement and/or financial donations. For more information contact Connie Eckhert, 484-4812 or Women's Perspectives, c/o 1181 College Street, Toronto, M6H 1B7.

MONTREAL WOMEN'S CENTRE IS 10 YEARS OLD

The Women's Information and Referral Centre, 3585 St-Urbain, is celebrating its 10th anniversary. Congratulations to all of the women who have made this possible.

NEW AWARD FOR VOLUNTEERS

In honour of Senator Thérèse Casgrain, who died in November of 1981, federal Minister of Health and Welfare, Monique Bégin, has announced a new award, the Prix Thérèse Casgrain. The purpose is to recognize a woman and a man, each year, who, because of their avant-garde spirit, social involvement and perseverance, have contributed in a significant manner to the advancement of a social cause and the betterment of their fellow citizens.

To be eligible a person must be a Canadian citizen, have led a volunteer activity in Canada, have perceived a problem or a social lack which has not yet been given priority and have worked actively to make the importance of this need known among the population.

The Minister will choose the recipients on the recommendation of a national selection committee. The first awards will be made this spring (1983). More information is available from: Prix Thérèse Casgrain, Public Affairs Department, Health and Welfare Canada, Ottawa K1A 0K9, (613) 995-8452.

MORE THAN FITNESS

The YWCA of Metro Toronto is working hard to make the media in this town aware that there is more to the YW than fitness. To accomplish this end, the YW is inviting key media reps to lunch for informal sessions on issues of concern to women. So far they have done women and employment and women and pensions and are planning a third for spring. The objective is to make the YW credible spokespersons on issues affecting women as they emerge in the news.

NEW NEWSLETTER ON SOCIAL ASSISTANCE REVIEW

The Social Assistance Review Board Study Group is producing a quarterly newsletter which will include up-dates on legislation; summary of cases of interest; unreported divisional court cases and judicial review cases. The first issue will be available in mid-March and the Group is looking for submissions. Cost of the publication is \$5 to cover production, postage, correspondence and minutes of monthly meetings.

For information: SARB Study Group, Susan Shaw, Parkdale Community Legal Services Inc., 1239 Queen Street West, Toronto M6K 1L5, 531-2411.

THE HOUSE PLANNED PARENTHOOD BUILT

Planned Parenthood of Toronto has opened Canada's first multi-service centre for adolescents at 36B Prince Arthur Avenue.

Called simply "The House", the centre will begin its services with primary health care, family planning and sexual counselling. The House plans to add life-skills workshops, drug and alcohol abuse programs and mental health counselling during the first year. Additional services will come later. The aim is to develop a comprehensive service for adolescents, free of charge or covered under the OHIP. Information at: Planned Parenthood, 961-8290, or The House, 927-7171.

WOMAN IN SPORT REPORT AVAILABLE

Have women attained sex equality with men in sport? The Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women has released a report entitled Fair Ball, Towards Sex Equality in Canadian Sport, by M. Ann Hall, professor of physical education and recreation, University of Alberta, and Dorothy A. Richardson, a Canadian Human Rights Commissioner and a former athlete and physical educator.

The study reveals that while women's interest in sport is increasing, the number of women at the managerial level of sport is actually declining. For a copy, write to Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, 66 Slater Street, 18th Floor, Ottawa K1P 5H1, or call (613) 992-4975.

Also available from the CACSW is Reproductive Hazards at Work: Men, Women and the Fertility Gamble by Nancy Miller Chenier, a consultant and researcher specializing in health and safety issues.

The study reaches a disturbing conclusion: that reproductive hazards are present in most workplaces and that they endanger not only pregnant women but other women workers, men and future generations. For a copy, write to the address above.

DEPO-PROVERA: A SHOT IN THE DARK

A report by the Quebec Public Interest Research Group.

Q-PIRG undertook this study of Depo-Provera in an attempt to make information available about this drug, which Upjohn Canada seems eager to thrust on Canadian women. Unfortunately, despite the fact that this powerful drug has been given to about 5 million third-world women, few human test results are available which clarify the exact nature of Depo's side effects.

Depo medroxyprogesterone acetate (Depo's generic name), is an injectable contraceptive which functions by dealing a substantial shock to the hypothalamus, thereby suppressing hormone releases and subsequently, ovulation. It is injected every three months in 150 mg. doses. Depo-Provera IS a particularly effective method of birth control, and for this reason it has been highly recommended by such organizations as the International Planned Parenthood Federation.

In Canada, Depo-Provera has been approved for use in the treatment of endometriosis and as a pain killer in endometrial cancer. However, despite the fact that it is not approved as a contraceptive, it can be, and is, legally prescribed for this purpose. It is entirely within a doctor's prerogative to prescribe a drug for a non-approved use, when, in that doctor's opinion, the benefits outweigh the risks. The federal government does not assume the role of regulating drug use. Moreover, Depo-Provera has been used in various Ontario institutions to induce a state of amenorrhea in some mentally retarded women. This practice is justified on the basis that the women cannot control the effects of menstruation, and also to prevent them from becoming pregnant.

The possible side effects of this drug are devastating. Animal and clinical studies have indicated such possible side effects as: lowered life expectancy, temporary or permanent sterility, diabetes, permanent damage to the pituitary gland, lowered resistance to infection, deformities in

offspring and cervical, endometrial and breast cancer. In addition to this head-spinning array of possibilities, are the "less serious" effects: depression, loss of sex drive and/or orgasm, headache, limb pain, nausea and dark spotting of facial skin, among others. Furthermore, little or no research has been done to determine the drug's effects on future children of former users, or on the infants who are receiving doses of Depo-Provera through breast milk.

While the "experts" debate the legitimacy of the few tests which have been conducted on Depo, it is being considered for use as a contraceptive in Canada. At present, medical experts foresee a very limited market for Depo-Provera in Canada, but as we have seen, this market is too often determined at the discretion of individual doctors.

A copy of the report is available from QPIRG, 2070 Mackay Street, Room 399, Montréal, Québec, (514) 879-4500. It was reviewed here by Alicia Schreader and reprinted from "Breaking the Silence", Feminist Caucus, School of Social Work, Carleton University, Ottawa K1S 5B6.

This Newsletter was produced by Lee Grills, Audrey Orr, Janet Skelton and Carol Sutton.