

HOLIDAY GREETINGS TO OCSW MEMBERS!

Whatever your religious persuasion, the holiday season affords an opportunity to reflect on our world and give thanks for the good things in our lives. It is also a time to recoup, to gather the physical and spiritual strength that enables us to carry on fighting for that in which we believe while maintaining a sense of love and balance. May the grace of this season fill the lives of your and yours and may the blessing of peace be achieved in our lifetime.

WOMEN AND LEGAL ACTION NOW AVAILABLE

This publication by OCSW member Elizabeth Atcheson, founding member Mary Eberts, Beth Symes, with Jennifer Stoddard, proposes an organization to fund the planning and coordination of a systematic approach to using the courts be established. Such an organization, known as a legal action fund, would allow women's groups and their lawyers to achieve gains in equality by striking down discriminatory legislation and establishing precedents to consolidate positive changes in the law.

(Note: The opportunity to challenge sex-based discrimination through legal action will be greatly increased when section 15, the equality rights provision, of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms comes into force on April 17, 1985.)

Women and Legal Action is available from Canadian Council on Social Development, 55 Parkdale Avenue, Ottawa, K1Y 1E5 (Catalogue no. LW 31-18/1984E; ISBN 0-660-11715-0) Price: \$4.95.
Aussi disponible en français.

FUN AUCTION FOLLOW-UP

Once again the OCSW annual fund (and fun!) raising auction was a financial success. Approximately \$900 was realized after expenses were settled. Our sincere thanks to all who contributed to the cause by way of auction items, time and energy.

However, attendance was relatively low, about 50 in total. That means a good deal of our revenue was derived from people purchasing tickets but not attending.

When the auction was first suggested, the objective was to create an occasion when we could all get together, bring our friends along and have some fun while we generated the nominal operating funds we require each year to keep this all-volunteer organization afloat.

Although all of us are grateful to have raised the money we need, we still wish to achieve the other objective of fun and togetherness.

So, if anyone has an idea for some other kind of function that will enable us to raise some money but which will also show better attendance, please speak up. Call Lee Grills, 488-1486 or Carol Sutton, 690-3213, or drop the steering committee a line at the post box number on the letterhead.

POVERTY IN THIS PROVINCE

Copies of The Other Ontario, about poverty in the province, are available from Richard Johnston, MPP, Room 159, Parliament Buildings, Queen's Park, Toronto, M7A 1A2.

WHAT'S A "DIRTY MOVIE"? WHO DECIDES...

PORNOGRAPHY is a form of hate literature against women (children and increasingly towards men) that hurts us all by eroding our society's view of ourselves as individuals with meaning and worth. It desensitizes all of us to the pain and suffering of the victims.

It is one thing to write those words, fully believing their intent, and another to sit and try to watch the 21 minutes of nauseating scenes of torture, mutilation and sexual perversion assembled from outtakes of censored films by the Ontario Censor Board.

The power of those graphic images overwhelms all polite livingroom discussions. How did I know it was 21 minutes long? Simple. It's a welcome change to watch the minute counter adjacent to the screen than the horrible images that can instill nightmares for a lifetime.

Prepare your stomachs as I attempt to describe one of the scenes that people can still acquire through video outlets, to view on a Saturday night at home with friends.

"A woman is being held on a bed by another woman as a man secures her by sitting on her. As he slices her shoulder with a knife he decides this isn't stimulating enough. Taking a pair of wire cutters he snips off her fingertip. He continues to mutilate her body by cutting off a hand with a power saw as he instructs the cameras to get closer to the action. He wants them closer for the climax of the scene as he opens her body from end to end, reaches in and proceeds to disembowel her lifting her inards in the air to the camera."

There's no implied violence that would require any imagination. THEY VISUALLY TAKE YOU THROUGH EVERY STEP OF THE WAY. Not only is it difficult to believe anyone could find this stuff sexually stimulating, it is beyond this writer's comprehension that crews of people

perform on both sides of the camera to capture it on film.

Nonetheless, pornography exists, is being filmed in increasing quantities and peddled to the Canadian public over and under the counter. What can we do about it?

In Ontario the Theatres Act provides for a Board to:

- license and monitor theatres for public safety;
- license projectionists and film distributors;
- classify films for public exhibition

The most controversial role is that of screening films to classify them, perhaps in the process discovering material which goes beyond the limits of perceived community standards.

These standards were developed in the late 1970's through meetings and discussions with groups and individuals from all walks of life across the province. The current Theatres Act does not spell out guidelines for the Board nor does it provide specific authority for the Board to enforce the accumulated ideas on community standards. Further an Amendment to the Theatres Act, which is presently in the Legislature, places the onus for development of standards in the hands of politicians who make-up provincial Cabinet, instead of the Board.

OCSW and many other women's groups had recommended the Censor Board be given clearly defined guidelines, written into the enabling legislation, providing the authority to censor films that advocate violence against people.

DEFINITIONS OUT-DATED

However, the real crux of the problem is the Criminal Code of Canada, which defines the boundaries of most of the Board's decisions. The Code's definition of obscenity focuses almost solely on hard core pornography, defined as vaginal

penetration. Last revised in 1959, the Code is obsessed with sex and ignores violence and torture.

OCSW and others recommend (Newsletter, September 1983) obscenity be removed from the Criminal Code and replaced by a clear definition of pornography. This is the proposed definition:

" Pornography is deemed to be any printed visual, audio or otherwise represented presentation, or part thereof, with a theme of violence including but not limited to the depiction of submission or coercion or lack of consent or denigration of any human being for the sexual gratification of another or others, and in which such behaviours can be taken to be advocated or endorsed. For the purposes of this definition, the depiction of any person under the age of 16 in such material will be considered proof of lack of consent sufficient to warrant prohibition of such material. Wherever appropriate the words obscene and obscenity should be deleted and replaced by the words pornographic and pornography."

NOT CENSORSHIP

Despite the name of the Board, the issue really isn't censorship, it's pornography. As this material proliferates it desensitizes us, seems to make it more acceptable and breaks down the taboo against acting out brutal fantasies, bringing them into the realm of the possible.

The exploitation of children, some as young as a few months, is part of the growing phenomena.

In truth, eliminating pornography is a human rights issue and this material can be defined as hate propaganda. OCSW recommend amending the Federal Broadcasting Act to reflect the premise that pornography is a human rights issue by adding the words "or sex" to Section 6.1(b) so it reads: " No station, network operator, or pay television licensee shall broadcast... any abusive comment or abusive pictorial

representation of any race, religion, creed, or sex."

WHERE DO GO WE GO FROM HERE?

In addition OCSW pornography sub-committee continues to lobby government on three levels, the prime activity being directed at the federal government to change the definition of obscenity to pornography in the Criminal Code. For more information or to volunteer your assistance, call Helen Findlay. (HOME) 534-5131.

CENSOR BOARD FACTS

- Viewed about 2,500 films last year
- Less than 10% of the films conflict with community standard guidelines
- Board consists of 16 viewers who watch films in groups of five, publish their reports and allow for dissenting, minority opinions.
- Decisions may be appealed and will be heard by a different panel of Board members.
- Eliminations are based on:
 - very graphic or prolonged violence, torture, bloodletting;
 - explicit portrayal of sexual activity, undue or prolonged emphasis on genitalia and ill treatment of animals.

These are normally considered to violate community standards and are scenes for which eliminations would normally be requested.

- Classifications:
 - Family
 - Parental Guidance
 - Adult Accompaniment
 - Restricted

MEDIAWATCH: IMAGES OF WOMEN INFLUENCE
OUR PLACE IN SOCIETY

Mediawatch is the only national women's organization in Canada dedicated to eliminating sexism in the media. And you can help in this overwhelming task.

Mediawatch has prepared complaint forms that make it easy for you to record your opinion when a radio or TV program, newspaper or magazine story or ad offends you. Just fill one out and send it to Mediawatch. They, in turn, tabulate the complaints and forward them under the Mediawatch banner to the appropriate authorities.

The organization's goal is to improve the portrayal of women and girls in the media by eliminating sexist and pornographic images and encouraging the creation of images that reflect the changing and diverse role of women in Canadian society.

Mediawatch says sex-role stereotyping is

- Failure to represent women in their full variety of ages, shapes, sizes and colours

My understanding of sex-role stereotyping agrees with the definition spelled out by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission in its report Images of Women. Accordingly I have something to say about:

RADIO

Call letters:

Program or ad:

Day and time:

TELEVISION

Call letters:

Program or ad:

Day and time:

PRINT

Publication name:

Item or ad:

Edition (date):

-----Canadian media only -----

My comment is: _____

Name _____

Address _____

Sex role stereotyping is: (as stated above)

- Failure to reflect the increasing diversity of women's lives
- Failure to portray a representative range of the occupations women hold
- Invisibility of women in discussion of many issues
- Portrayal of women as sexual lures and decorative objects
- Invisibility of female experts and decision-makers
- Language which assumes everyone is male unless identified otherwise

Sex-role stereotyping is harmful to women because it dehumanizes, misrepresents and degrades us. The extreme form of this distortion is pornography.

To order complaint forms, contact Mediawatch's Ontario representative Jane Farrow, 119 Bellwoods Ave, Toronto, M6J 3N4 or call 362-8047.

Or use a format like the official complaint form. The text goes as follows:

Send to: Mediawatch, National Watch on Images of Women in the Media Inc. Send one copy to Mediawatch; 209 - 636 West Broadway, Vancouver, B.C., V5Z 1G2 and retain one copy for your files.

PRO-CHOICE FIGHT CONTINUES IN 1985

Despite the recent jury acquittal of Dr. Henry Morgentaler and his colleagues, the right to determine her own reproductive health and destiny is not a fact for all Canadian women. Those who support pro-choice policies still have a long way to go.

One simple action any OCSW member -- or any other woman or man! -- can take

right now is to let our elected officials, federal and provincial, know how we feel.

The following is the text of a letter sent by two OCSW members and is available for your use. It would be best to adapt the copy to your own words but, if time does not permit you to do so, please feel free to use it as it is.

The Right Honourable Brian Mulroney
Prime Minister of Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

cc: Hon. William Davis	Hon. Keith Norton	Rt. Hon. John Turner
Hon. Robert Welch, Q.C.	Hon. Robert Kaplan	Hon. Ed Broadbent
Hon. George Taylor	Hon. Douglas Frith	Hon. John Crosbie
Hon. Roy McMurtry	Hon. Svend Robinson	Hon. Take Epp
Hon. Robert Rae	Hon. Margaret Mitchell	Toronto Police Chief Jack
Hon. David Peterson (Your M.P.P.)	Hon. Walter Stewart (Your M.P.)	Marks

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

RE -- CANADA'S ABORTION LAW

The Canadian abortion law should be repealed immediately since it does not meet the reproductive health care needs of the women of this country today.

As part of the 72 per cent of Canadians in favour of freedom of choice, we (I) demand the pro-choice majority finally be recognized. (Source: 1982 Gallup poll -- 72 per cent of Canadians in favour of freedom of choice, i.e. decision made by the individual woman in consultation with her doctor.)

Dr. Henry Morgentaler's abortion clinics only recognize the real need of Canadian women at this time. We insist all appropriate levels of government in Canada recognize the message inherent in the four jury acquittals (in two provinces) awarded Dr. Morgentaler to date: that is, our law must change.

We urge the province of Ontario to cease persecuting Dr. Morgentaler, allow his clinic to function peacefully, protect it from anti-abortionist obstruction and accept the clinic as a pilot project for training Ontario health care professionals, giving the free-standing clinic legal status.

Seventy-two per cent is an overwhelming majority. We refuse to be ignored any longer. Please take immediate action to bring about suitable legislative change in this country.

NEW PUBLICATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

This new publication, Canadian Human Rights Advocate, is aimed at increasing human rights advocacy and networking among minority groups, women, disabled, advocates, unions and students. It will be published by the Canadian Human Rights Reporter, a federally chartered non-profit organization which has published for the past five years all human rights decisions across Canada.

The Reporter's Board of Directors includes Gordon Fairweather, Shelagh Day, David Vickers, Marilou McPhedran, Rene Hurtubise, Charles Walden and Kathleen Ruff.

Annual subscription is \$15 for 10 issues, \$25 for institutions. Make cheques payable to: Canadian Human Rights Advocate. Or use your MasterCard; submit card no. and expiry date. Send to Kathleen Ruff, Box 1703, 500 Murray Ross Parkway, Downsview, M3J 2Z3.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY -- MARCH 8

The Committee for March 8 is bringing Angela Davis to Toronto to speak on International Women's Day, 1985 -- one decade since International Women's Year. They are looking for participation and contributions. For more info, call Costanza at 654-3835.

Also, the March 8 Coalition is proposing a program of events, including a dance, community events/forums, a march and rally. They can be reached at P.O. Box 70, Sta.F, Toronto, M4Y 2L4.

* THIS ISSUE OF THE OCSW NEWSLETTER *
* WAS WRITTEN AND PRODUCED BY CAROL *
* SUTTON AND WAYNE DOHERTY. STUFFED *
* SEALED AND DELIVERED BY HANDS TO *
* NUMEROUS TO MENTION. *
