



# NEWSLETTER

WOMEN IN TRADES, TECHNOLOGY, OPERATIONS & BLUE COLLAR WORK

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## *Report from the National Coordinator*

by Marcia Braundy

It has been a busy time for the National Network and for me as I work with others to reach our goals. The most major event, of course, has been our national conference, *Surviving and Thriving II - The Sequel*, which took place in Ottawa at the beginning of February. Sharon Margison, the conference organizer, worked mostly on her own, with my support and assistance and ONWITT member Caroline Zondervan's. She was also ably assisted by members of the Conference Planning Committee and at the local level by members of Ottawa WITT (OWITT). I would like to thank Sharon, on behalf of the conference committee, for her fine job of gathering 350 WITT women and advocates, employers, unions, educators, consultants and government reps who came together for skill building, information sharing, program development work and just plain networking. We feel this representation is quite significant at a time of difficult recession in most of Canada. Some of their feedback appears on page 7.

During the first two days, WITT women and their advocates studied and voted on a structure for the organization developed by the steering committee during the last couple of years. An election was held for the National Coordinator position, and, as you can see by the byline above, I was the successful candidate. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Janis McKeag of Winnipeg for running a principled campaign, for her continuing support for the organization and her graceful support for my re-election. According to our structure (see Page 6), this will be my last term and will run for two years or until the next national conference, at which time we hope there will be many candidates for both Regional Representatives and National Coordinator of the WITT National Network.

Eighty-five WITT women and resource people were sponsored by us to attend. This was made possible by financial and in-kind contributions from both provincial and federal governments, employers, unions and community based organizations (see list on back page). Eighty-four workshops took place, and the majority were sponsored by the delivering agencies. In addition, many other TTO (trades, technical and operations) women were sponsored by their employers or their unions. Much of the follow-up work is coming to an end, and we find ourselves in the black. This money is being used to subsidize the transcription and editing of approximately 35 of the presentations/workshops for the next *Surviving and Thriving Book*, which we hope will be available by the Fall.

We regret to inform you that the Minister of Employment and Immigration, Bernard Valcourt has chosen not to support the National Databank Inventory of TTO Women in Canada. After

three years of discussions, proposals, \$\$ and time spent designing and developing it, negotiation meetings and over 100 letters of support and cooperation from business, labour and provincial governments, in a time when more employers need it to fulfil their employment equity requirements, we have been told they will not fund this national project. The Minister's office has indicated that, "perhaps," they might consider a rewritten scaled-down pilot in one province. Because we strongly believe in the efficacy of this means of helping women and industry understand and locate each other, we will continue to pursue an implementation phase for the databank. The two provinces being considered are British Columbia or Ontario. We will keep you posted on the progress of this initiative.

We would like to thank John Nunziata, Liberal Employment Critic; Dawn Black, New Democrat Status of Women Critic, and Joy Langdon, a printer by trade and New Democrat member on the Standing Committee on Employment, for their interest in and support for the WITT National Network's initiatives. It was quite inspiring for women, many of whom had never been to Parliament before, to attend a session where a question was asked on the issue most concerning them, and to attend a Press Conference which included the articulate support of these people. (See Page 2.)

WITT National Network and the IAS Committee have submitted Briefs to the Parliamentary Committee to Review the Employment Equity Act. The former focused on Coverage, Accountability, Enforcement and Availability; the latter dealt primarily with Training and Action Plans. This Committee heard its last presentation on March 25th, and is expected to report on May 1st. We should see results in the form of new legislation presented to Parliament by the Fall. Some of the issues are very complex, and provoke heated debate between employers, unions, and designated group members. It will be interesting to see whose voice holds sway with elected politicians who are educating themselves on this issue through their time on this committee. We wish them wisdom in their venture, and hope they strengthen the legislation to enable WITT women more successful access and ongoing employment. Copies of our Brief are available from the national office for \$1 to cover photocopying.

And finally, the WITT National Network/IAS Committee sponsored a DACUM and program development meeting on WITT courses (exploratory courses in trades and technology for women), with assistance from the BC Apprenticeship Branch, the Canadian Construction Assoc., Amalgamated Construction Association, the New Brunswick Ministry of Advanced Education

& Training, Newfoundland Apprenticeship Branch, and the CARS Council. This national two-day meeting was hosted by the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology to develop a set of national standards for these important courses which are often the entry point for women considering a technical career but with little previous exposure to the possibilities. Since presently these courses range from 6-32 weeks and vary extensively in content, 15 instructors, administrators and advocates from eight provinces met to identify the subject areas that should be in all courses, including which of those should be in trade-specific courses for women i.e. Electronics for Women, Carpentry for Women etc. We also outlined the minimum course lengths, potential entry requirements, student/teacher ratios and other elements necessary for successful courses. We will be formatting this material and distributing it widely. We also hope to be able to recommend some curricula and

course outlines currently available in Canada.

The Front Line Sub-Committee is looking into the development of training for managers and front-line workers. Gaps have been identified through our research, and the committee is exploring the most effective means for working with industry. We have had some concerns about our recently developed annotated bibliography of programs that are being implemented by employers, unions and educators across the country, and it will not be available for distribution until we can work those out.

There is a great deal of excellent information in the document, and we hope that you will be able to use it as a networking tool by sometime in the Summer.

The WITT/IAS Committee has been working together very well, and we are starting to produce some significant results.

## HEARTFELT FAREWELL ...

*The WITT National Network wishes to mark the passing of one of our sisters in TTO. Carlyal Gittens was originally from Nova Scotia, spent time in Ontario, and worked in Vancouver B.C. and was one of the founding members of Vancouver Women In Trades.*

*Carlyal died in Chatham, Ontario early this year. She was just thirty-nine years old.*

*Carlyal served her apprenticeship as a bricklayer, then moved to tile setting. She dearly loved bricklaying, but suffered so much harassment in this field she changed her trade. When "told" that she might find tile setting less physically demanding she said,*

*"What do they think? That I carry the tiles in one at a time?" Carlyal was noted for her great one-liners.*

*Carlyal was a woman of colour, a tradeswoman, and a union woman. She was very active in the Vancouver Women in Trades group of the late 70's and 80's. She belonged to the Tilesetters Union, Local 3, British Columbia.*

*Farewell Carlyal.*

— *Excerpt from The Hansard, February 5, 1992* —

### *Employment Equity*

**Mr. John Nunziata (York South - Weston)**

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

As the Minister is aware, the Conference of Women in Trades, Technology and Operations is winding up today in Ottawa. Its proposal to create a national data bank allowing women in non-traditional occupations to network with employers has been on the ministers desk for over a year now.

Will the minister agree to meet with representatives of this organization today to explain why his government is backing away from its commitment?

**Hon. Bernard Valcourt (Minister of Employment and Immigration)**

Mr. Speaker, on my way to the House today I received the representation of the national co-ordinator. As the member knows, we are reviewing the request for funds from the women in trades and technology group. No decision has yet been taken on the request, but I should be able to render a decision soon.

**Mr. John Nunziata (York South-Weston)**

Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the same minister.

If the minister is truly committed to employment equity with regard to women, and if his government is truly committed to putting some of the 1.5 million unemployed Canadians back to work, can he explain why this worth-while proposal has been sitting on his desk for over a year?

If he is truly committed to employment equity, I ask him: Will he meet with representatives of the organization today and follow through on his commitment to fund this worth-while project?

Mr. Speaker, it seems necessary to have the member acknowledge that there are 900,000 more women working today in Canada than there were in September 1984. That is quite an accomplishment. The hon. member is discussing one particular case, a group seeking funds. I have indicated that we are reviewing the request for funds and I should be able to make a decision soon.

*(Eds. note: Our thanks also to Dawn Black, NDP Critic for the Status of Women, for her timely interjection at the point where the Hon. Bernard Valcourt presents the House with his figure of 900,000 more women working in Canada since 1984: "Yes, and they're all flipping hamburgers!" These small and noteworthy additions are no longer included in the Hansard.)*

# Keeping our WITTs about us...

Thanks to all of you for keeping the National Network informed of your WITT groups' activities. This is your forum, and a great place to share ideas and initiatives. For another way to network, see the new *Thumbs up/Thumbs down* page.

Please send us material from your region for inclusion in the newsletter:

- 1) News about developments in your area (private sector, government, educational): WITT courses, role modelling projects, employment equity, and other approaches to our issues.
- 2) Brief articles (factual, fictional, or opinion) or "letters" to the newsletter. (We will use them as space permits).
- 3) We welcome creative approaches to our issues, i.e. original poetry, prose and graphics.
- 4) Useful resources information (preferably with some form of "review", annotation or description) and how to obtain it (address, cost etc.).
- 5) We want to start a media clippings & graphics collection and ask you *please* to send in articles and pics related to our issues.

## *Lower Mainland WITT (Excerpts from the Minutes)*

Lower Mainland Women in TTO/BCW met on December 10, 1991 and January 14 of this year. We are the newly resurrected

former Vancouver Women In Trades group that was operative in the late 70's to mid-80's. Lower Mainland WITT has been active in the promotion of a Women in Trades display at the British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT) Open House, scheduled for April 10, 11 and 12. We are also busy on the formation of a data bank of TTO/BCW women in the Lower Mainland. This newly formed group of women working or training in TTO, and their advocates are working to bring more women into these fields, and will meet on the second Tuesday of each month. For more information please contact Jackie Lilley, 6582 197th Street, Langley, B.C. V3R 4A8.

## *SASK WITT - From the SASK WITT Spring Update and Denise Needham*

Following on the heels of the popular video, "She's Got Her Ticket," SASK WITT is in the pre-production stages of a second. This new video will encourage young girls to explore a variety of interesting activities in science, sport, outdoors, trades and technology. The premise is that if girls play and develop in these areas while they are young, then when it is time to make a career choice, they will choose a career direction based on their own experiences and inclinations instead of society's pressure towards traditional

This is the newsletter of WITT National Network (Women in Trades, Technology, Operations and Blue-collar Work - National Network). A non-profit organization established in 1988, WITT National Network works at the national level for the encouragement, training and promotion of women into trades, technologies and operations. The organization also provides a communications and support network for women working in these fields and/or people and groups working toward these goals at a local, provincial or regional level. The activities and overall direction of the Network are currently undertaken by an Advisory Committee made up of representatives from each of five regions who maintain contact with and work to encourage the local- and provincial-level organizations. If you wish to participate or to know what is happening in your region, please contact local organizations (\* indicates newsletter).

## *Some WITT organizations:*

Newfoundland WITT; P.O. Box 9994, Station B, St. John's Newfoundland A1A 4L5; Heather Lyon, (709) 722-0766 and Bobbie Neil, (709) 739-7389.

WITT - Nova Scotia, YW-NOW; 1217 Barrington St., Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 1Y2; Rhonda MacCoy, (902) 425-0731.

New Brunswick Women in Trades and Technology and Blue Collar Workers; 26 Clarendon St., St. John, New Brunswick E2K 1A4; Brenda Losier, (506) 693-0415.

Le FRONT (Femmes Regroupées en Options Non-Traditionelles); Collette Boudrias, (514) 670-7866.

Options Non Traditionelles; 91 Rue St-Jean, Rm. 300, Longueuil, Quebec J4H 2W8; (514) 646-1030.

Women in Science and Engineering (WISE); P.O. Box 6067, Station A, Toronto, Ontario M5W 1P5; (416) 592-7615.

Ontario Network for Women in Trades and Technology (ONWITT); 121 Burns Circle, Barrie, Ont. L4N 5J8; Caroline Zondervan, (705) 722-4741.

Bridges Alumna Association: 290 Coronation Drive, Scarborough, Ontario M1E 2J6; Roberta McDowell.

Huronian WITT; Box 1836 Penetang, Ontario LOK 1P0; Angie Quinlan and Pauline Mancuso, (705) 549-3691.\*

London Women in Trades and Technology Network; 8 St. Patrick St., London, Ont. N6H 1P3; Maggie McDonald, (519) 439-7743.\*

Ottawa Women in Technology and Trades (OWITT); P.O. Box 5666, Merivale Depot, Nepean, Ontario K2C 3M1.\*

Thunder Bay Women in Trades and Technology Network Project; 4A South Court St., Suite 17, Thunder Bay, Ont. P7B 2W4; Martha Gingerich; (807) 345-0233 / 767-5286.

Manitoba Women in Trades and Technology; 580 Ingersoll St., Winnipeg, Manitoba R3G 2J4; Erin Linington, (204) 772-6591.\*

Saskatchewan WITTs: 1063 1st Ave. NE, Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan S6H 0Z8; Lois Baille, (306) 692-4428, 2287 East Hill, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7J 3E3; Arlene Steffen, (306) 374-6288, 3524 Victoria, Regina, Saskatchewan S4T 1M1; Denise Needham, (306) 522-4157.\*

Alberta Women in Trades and Technology; c/o Rita LaRose, 9503 - 94th Ave., Edmonton, Alberta T6C 1W9; (403) 466-3482.

Kootenay Women in Trades and Technology; R.R. #1, Winlaw, British Columbia V0G 2J0; Sherry Nicholson, (604) 352-3872.

Vancouver WITT; 826 E. Pender, Vancouver, British Columbia V6A 1W1; Annabelle Paxton, (604) 254-1909.

Victoria WITT; P.O. Box 6422, Station C, Victoria, British Columbia V8P 5M3; Bea McKenzie, (604) 384-0529.\*

Sunshine Coast WIT; S2, C18, RR#1, Gibsons, British Columbia V0N 1V0; Judie Myers, (604) 886-3654. \*

Yukon Territory; Betty Irwin, P.O. Box 3913, Whitehorse, Yukon Territories Y1A 5M6; (403) 667-3006; 399-4715.

occupations. Expected completion time is summer 1992. Secretary of State has generously funded both SASK WITT projects.

In October 1991, five trades and tech women spoke to between 1300 and 1500 grades 7 and 8 students in 24 Regina Schools. The speakers were well received, as was the video, "She's Got Her Ticket." All the schools indicated they would like to see this type of project continue. (See resource page for where to rent or buy "She's Got Her Ticket.")

Nineteen women carpentry students are going strong, and heading towards the completion of their 14-week basic carpentry course in Regina, under the tutelage of Valerie Overend and Denise Needham. The first group of ten carpentry students sat their Level 1 Saskatchewan Carpentry Apprenticeship examination on February 28. All ten have made the grade, with high marks of between 78 and 89%. Needham sees their success as due to an excellent life skills component (one quarter of the course), and to the high motivation of the UI recipients individually interviewed for the course. The snow is still on the ground in Regina, but Needham is positive about the chances of these Level 1 Carpenters finding work in the area. We hope to bring you a course evaluation, in our Summer Newsletter.

SASK WITT was invited by the Regina YWCA to play an active role in local International Women's Day Celebrations, and play they did! All the carpentry students worked together to create a "fashion show" of TTO! A half hour video of this extravaganza was created, and Denise hopes to have some copies available in the near future.

— If your WITT group would like to share the fun, call SASK WITT.

### *MBWITT* – from Janis McKeag

MBWITT, inspired by the conference, is going deeper to find more grass roots women. We anticipate a larger than usual turnout in April and May. We have also entered into direct dialogue with our Provincial Minister of Labour. The result of the above work will be published in our summer newsletter.

### *Huronia WITT* – By Angie Quinlan (excerpt from Newsletter – Winter 91/92)

As part of our mandate, we have been involved in promoting the existence of Huronia WITT to the community. One of the principal ways we have achieved this is by public speaking engagements to various community groups, some of which have been the Midland and District Businesswomen's Association, the Community Futures Committee, and the Georgian College Futures Program. Other areas of promotion have included various newspaper articles featuring Huronia WITT as a group and a number of personal profiles of our members, as well as the production of a video entitled "Huronian Women in Trades and Technology."

Nothing however, has been quite as rewarding as the role-modelling activities we have done for women who are involved with vocational training in courses such as the Technical Orientation for Women at Georgian College, Orillia; Muskoka Women in Trades in Bracebridge; and our local Females into Trades and Technology at Midland Secondary School. Each of us has definitely come away with something positive, whether it be desire to complete the training program and seek an apprenticeship or employment in the trades, or gaining a tremendous "shot in the

arm" being able to share our experiences with others. Another exciting aspect is being able to share our knowledge and experience with other communities wishing to establish their own WITT organizations, such as a group of women from Owen Sound who approached us for assistance. Not only do we have the opportunity to assist in whatever way we can but also to network with women like ourselves who need each other for support....

### *Hello from Newfoundland* – From Heather Lyon

Since returning from Ottawa, our WITT group has been very active. We've taken part in a week-long Career Fair, sponsored by the St. John's Board of Trade and Canada Employment Centre. This gave us the opportunity to meet and talk with a lot of students, teachers and counsellors. In turn, this has led to mentoring within the school systems. WITT members have subsequently been invited to make presentations in most of the high schools in and around St. John's as well as other parts of the Province. Later on in March we plan to do a province-wide tour that will include Labrador. Our aim is to enhance public awareness and meet our contact people throughout the province. An Easter basket fundraising campaign is planned also.

These are a few of the activities we have planned for the next few months. We will keep you informed of the results and would like very much to hear from your chapter about any plans or activities you have in mind.

### *ONWITT* – From Caroline Zondervan

A group ranging from first-year apprentices to WITT instructors met in London to strategize and plan for the next year. Plans are underway for a Provincial Conference in the fall. We are also active in the development of Provincial and Local Training Boards, which is a very hot issue in Ontario. Representatives from ONWITT are active across the Province in Employment Equity, Legislation Consultation, Development and Sponsoring of Training Programs, Labour Legislation Consultations and Unions. The Conference gave us the boost we needed, now just watch the smoke!

### *Halifax WITT* – From Madeline Comeau

Madeline's Sri Lankan curry, Leslee's chocolate layer cake, Mel's oriental salad, Rhonda's secret curry, and Deanna's cabbage rolls! These were just openers at a potluck held on February 18th for women who attended the WITT Conference and their friends who wish they could have. Although the focus for the evening was food and fun, Mel O'Toole, our regional representative, did get us onto some business items before the group dispersed. As a result of the conference, everyone was feeling positive about setting goals for WITT in the Halifax/Metro area. Leslee Nicholson is coordinating the production of a newsletter as a means of expanding the current network. The first edition is hot off the press. Contributions from our friends both in the Atlantic Region and across Canada are welcome. Mel hopes that through WITT, she will be able to compile an inventory of tradeswomen to work as needed at Bryony House, a transition house for women in Halifax. Kate Harrison and Leslee are interested in investigating ways of identifying women in the trades at community colleges and providing them with better information on preparing for the screening procedures at DND.

At the second meeting held March 25th at Joanne and Kate's

## NOTABLE QUOTES

*I always feel the movement is a sort of mosaic. Each of us puts in one little stone, and then you get a great mosaic at the end.*

place, it was decided to take the necessary steps to incorporate under the Societies' Act so that tax-deductible donations could be solicited. Yes, that's right! We want to do some fundraising. Many exciting projects were discussed such as a scholarship fund and a role modelling program.

Madeline would like to be informed if any WITT women are

visiting this area as she would like to provide opportunities for the women at Nova Scotia Power in the YW-NOW program to meet and talk with women across the country with a TTO background. And, of course, if your visit happens to coincide with a WITT meeting, you'll be exposed to our famous Maritime hospitality. Till next time ...

## WHAT MIGHT A WITT GROUP DO?

*Some ideas developed out of workshops with our National Coordinator and WITT groups in the Atlantic Provinces.*

- ✓ Provide a place/people to go to for support, who might help others to go that extra step.
- ✓ Develop a base of women in TTOs and Advocates to provide for collective strength.
- ✓ Educate for women's equality with:
  - Employers
  - Unions
  - Teachers, students, school and college administrators
  - Society in general

### Activities:

- ✓ Act as an information and contact group for the above
- ✓ Advocacy and public education
- ✓ Political Action with media
- ✓ Lobbying for WITT employment at major projects, employers and unions, with Provincial and Federal Governments, Contractors, Building Trades Councils, Individual Unions
- ✓ Engage in letter writing campaigns
- ✓ Gather statistics and engage in research studies
- ✓ Support those who are legally challenging discrimination
- ✓ Promote appropriate technology for rural areas
- ✓ Act as role models to go into jr & sr secondary schools
- ✓ Develop a mentoring program

### What resources might be necessary?

- ✓ Women who are actually involved in TTOs from all over the province.

- ✓ WITT Advocates
- ✓ An Information sheet, perhaps with endorsements from Hydro, EIC, employers, unions, educators, etc. that describes your objectives and activities.
- ✓ Someone or a group to assist with secretarial services/clerical support (for letter writing campaigns, briefs to government and industry etc.)
- ✓ Communications network – dollars for phone or the use of a free phone
- ✓ Travel dollars to ensure broad provincial participation
- ✓ Grants knowledge and written materials all in one box so it can be used by all and not get lost
- ✓ A fostering group where WITT could be housed, phone messages taken etc. (Outreach, Women In Science and Engineering [WISE], Women's Employment Project, Women's Enterprise Bureau, Women's Centre, Advisory Council on Status of Women)

### Where might resources come from?

#### Finding the women:

- Community colleges' lists of graduates
- Provincial Apprenticeship Branch list of female apprentices and graduates (if not a list, then would they mail a notice?)
- Approach media, inform and ask for articles to raise profile of the issue and give phone number so women are aware that local WITT group exists and can contact it.
- Ask employers and unions for lists, or to inform their WITTs that the organization is in operation

- Call a meeting, advertise in paper, on radio and local cable network and see who comes
- ✓ Letterhead – Employment Assistance Program; Donations from local business or union.
- ✓ Travel Dollars – Employers who are developing Employment Equity plans; Women's Directorate/ Secretariat Office Grants programs as an (organizing project); Secretary of State Women's Program grant; donations; EIC delivery assistance.

### Who wants to help make it happen?

- ✓ WITT Women? Advocates? Support People? Get commitments: names, addresses, phone numbers; areas of interest etc.

These are just a few of the questions that can be asked of a group to start some thinking about whether to proceed? how to proceed? and who will begin? Each of these questions can be asked in a specific community, and many different potential resources will emerge.

Good luck and keep the WITT National Network posted. If we can do anything to assist, let us know.

*(Eds. note: Huronia WITT has written a wonderfully specific guide to "Building a Support Group," which we strongly recommend to all active and growing WITT Organizations. Look out for this informative piece in the next newsletter, or write directly to Huronia WITT).*

## NOTABLE QUOTES

*Women offer new leadership in an uninspired time, a new supply of energy in a void of scarcity, and the power of our collective spirit in a time of apathy.*

# The Structure of The WITT National Network

Joyce Rankin, Manitoba WITT

At the February 2-5 Founding Conference of the WITT National Network, one major item of discussion was the structure of the national organization.

For a year prior to the conference, discussions had taken place to draft a document to be discussed, amended and ratified at the conference. In April, 1990, SASKWITT came forward to the Winnipeg meeting with an initial draft. After a follow-up Prairie Regional Meeting, the evolving structure was discussed and developed at subsequent meetings in Vancouver, Halifax and Toronto. Two things were constantly considered: the reality of no funds to support the organization, and the practical working group that resulted from the meetings themselves. This conference planning committee was made up of representatives from each region.

The Statement of Purpose adopted by the plenary is: "To address, from a feminist perspective, the common issues affecting women who presently work, who desire to work, or who are training to work in the areas of trades, technology, operations or blue collar work. Feminist perspective is defined as: moving towards equality of women by accommodating differences – e.g. economic, social, racial, political, physical and cultural."

Regular members are women who are interested in the achievement of the goals and objectives and who pay the membership fees. Associate memberships are open to individuals and organizations, who have voice, but no vote.

The structural framework which makes decisions consist of three bodies: the Conference itself, which determines the mandate and overall direction of the organization and elects the National

Coordinator; National Representatives and informed alternates (one each from each province and territory) selected by their members, and from that group an Advisory Committee (one member from each of the Atlantic provinces, Quebec, Ontario, the Prairies and B.C., Alberta and the Yukon) was selected. It is this latter group that makes the decisions between conferences. The National Representatives meet bi-annually where possible.

Four of the Advisory Committee members are: Lucette Pineau (Quebec), Maggie McDonald (Ontario), Erin Linnington (Prairies) and Rita LaRose (B.C., Alta and Yukon). The Atlantic rep is still being decided upon. These members will have names and addresses of the other contact people in your area.

There are, of course, many issues remaining in finalizing a flexible, national structure. Some of these are: setting membership fees, determining a mechanism for dealing with proxy voting that allows involvement of members who cannot attend conferences, and is not subject to abuse. Other issues include personnel and administration, which are reflected in a draft personnel policy.

Since this is a new national organization, not all 24 National Representatives and Informed Alternates have been identified. Get involved at the local level, and volunteer to be a contact in your province or territory!

**Note from the National Coordinator:** *The next edition of the WITT National Newsletter (Summer 1992) shall list the National Representatives, and clarify the cost and terms of membership in our organization. We appreciate your patience in this period of development and transition. If you need this information prior to that time please contact the national office.*

## Notes from the conference organizer

Sharon Margison

After many months of hard work, it is rewarding to be able to look back and know that "Surviving and Thriving II" was a success. I now look forward to seeing the proceedings book, in order to know more about the presentations that took place! As amusing as that is, I have no regrets. Except, I would have liked to have been able to meet more of the participants personally. It was a pleasure to have the opportunity to work for WITT and all TTO women. Organizing "Surviving and Thriving II" would not have been possible, though, without the help of many. In addition to the financial support and in-kind assistance received from various organizations, there were a number of individuals who contributed a great deal of time and support.

Throughout the months leading up to the conference, Marcia Braundy and Caroline Zondervan were constant sources of support and direction. Other key supporters were members of the WITT Conference Planning Committee, Ottawa WITT – especially Sylvia Martin, Debbie Bailey and Violet Crossley – Myrna Law-West, Lina Genier, my assistant Carol Throop and Marcia's assistant Maree Farrell.

I hope there will be other opportunities for me to work on behalf of TTO women and with WITT. The energy and enthusiasm is empowering, truly refreshing, while their issues are numerous and critical.

Recently, I was reminded of just how much work needs to be

done on some fronts, when I participated in one of the consultations on Ending Violence Against Women. The panel's news release and promotional literature presents a one-sided picture of women as the only victims and speaks of "a future without fear for the women of Canada". Surely it's time that government and employers realized they, society as a whole and our entire economy are victims of such violence, too. And what can be more blatant expressions of fear than attempts to psychologically or physically dominate, or to use destructive means for dealing with negative feelings; such as workplace harassment, sabotage and violence.

For many of us, it is all too clear that violence against women is not just a social issue: it directly interferes with economic development and productivity. With women today being a major resource group for TTO occupations, attitudes have to change fast. The unfortunate fact, given the experiences of too many TTO women thus far, is that they should already have changed.

For what little good these consultations will achieve (many of us are skeptical), I would not have been as well-versed in the issue without my involvement in organizing "Surviving and Thriving II." I look forward to hearing about new and increased efforts taking place since the conference, and in closing, I offer this line from "Poem For a Lady Whose Voice I Like" by Nikki Giovanni:

*"Show me someone not full of herself and I'll show you a hungry person."*

# VOICES OF THE GRASS ROOTS

**M**y experience at the conference was extremely fulfilling, more than stimulating, and I was able to carry a lot of information back to the women in my electronics class. A number of my classmates are mothers and/or have been out of school 10 to 20 years. They are determined to succeed at this and they will! ...I was also able to contact some women who are willing to speak with us as role models, and to bounce ideas around with other students and women working as technicians, concerning our training and future training improvements. Our class is submitting a set of suggestions concerning training via our coordinator Hannah Hadiken, to the committee that is making recommendations to the Women's Representative on the Canadian Labour Force Development Board (*WITT note: the Reference group*),... we have discovered that one of our difficulties is the language that describes the activities of components in circuits; and that if we can translate those descriptions into language familiar to us, the activity of the components is easy to understand...

*Dorothy Forster, "Someday Electronics Technician",  
Vancouver Community College*

**I**t was a fabulous and inspiring conference....

*B. D'Silva*

**I** met an unemployed Machinist from Toronto who was moving to my area. We "networked." She starts work in my shop Monday. I was the first female in this shop. The doors finally opening! ... as a General Machinist apprentice and former welder I was amazed that I'd never heard of WITT before and was impressed by the National structure and work done by this organization. As a tradesperson, it was a great feeling to be amongst fellow workers who wore bras!

*Natalie Moroz Cornell, Stirling, Ont.*

**T**he National Conference in Ottawa was a buzz. I was really glad I decided to go. I learned so much and it restored the zeal I had lost during this past year in the automotive field.

*Laurie Fergusson, Apprentice Auto Mechanic, London, Ont.*

**T**he WITT National Conference gave me so much affirmation, I wish we could have them twice a year. Well done.

*Louise Nichol, Carpenter, WITT Instructor, Owen Sound, Ont.*

**I**solating isn't a healthy way of living and spending four days surrounded by tradeswomen left me craving for more. I want to work in the company of my peers, not as an outsider in a group of men. I want to see our network grow.

*Rebecca Kricfalusi, Apprentice Mould Maker, West Lorne, Ont.*

**T**he Conference in Ottawa was really impressive. Meeting and sharing our thoughts with other WITT members across this great country of ours is very educational in itself. I truly believe "networking" is the "key to success." This kind of interchange, coupled with positive action, I'm sure will help us reach our ultimate goal: CHANGE.

*Heather Lyon, WITT Regional Representative, Newfoundland*

**I** am still amazed at how much of a difference going to one conference can make to your life. I have grown and learned so much. Naramata made me enthusiastic and wanting to get involved. I feel like I have served an apprenticeship with the National Network, so to anyone who feels they want to become involved JUST DO IT - JUMP IN WITH BOTH FEET and you will be surprised at what you can learn and do!

*Maggie MacDonald, Conference Planning Committee,  
Electronics/Shop Technician, London, Ont.*

**I**t was an honour to attend ...and represent Nova Scotia Power as a presenter along with Gordon Keeling (IBEW), Madeline Comeau and Rhonda McCoy. Our panel was a great success. Organizations such as Hydro Québec, Ontario Hydro and Bell Canada (to name a few) were very impressed with what has taken place thus far with the YW-NOW Project and Nova Scotia Power.

Apparently other companies have tried similar programs but have been unsuccessful because the unions were not invited to participate along with the companies involved.

I attended a session on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for Women ... Hydro Québec has 13 women lineworkers and they do all aspects of linework. They have modified their work gloves to accommodate a woman's hand. The fingers have been shortened and the space between the fingers moved closer together. Hydro Québec keeps the gloves in stock for the women, but have found the men are now using them. The men found the gloves to be less restrictive and better for gripping and doing finer work. Another very informative session was "Supportive Work Environments". This session looked at a variety of barriers confronting women in the workplace, including harassment, language, work style, and structure of work. The women in TTO jobs that attended this session listed 24 problems and the organizations that attended tried to come up with recommendations and solutions. A very rewarding session!

*Deanna E. Walker, Nova Scotia Power Corp.*

**COVERALLS WITH "DROP SEAT" FEATURE**

**WORKING WOMAN**

**DESIGNS AND MANUFACTURE**

**WORK WEAR FOR WOMEN**

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**WITT National Network Newsletter**

R.R. #1, Winlaw, British Columbia V0G 2J0 Phone & Fax (604)226-7624

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We have added WITT National Network to our mailing list.

# How it was for me...

from Terry Avery

I truly believe I must be one of the luckiest men in the world to have had the opportunity and privilege to experience another WITT National Conference. In much the same way as the Conference in Naramata, this was another "Oh wow!" experience. Ottawa and Naramata were such personal highs I felt as if I could have flown home without the airplane.

It is a wondrous thing (perhaps from my male perspective) how women seem able to come together with such warmth, caring and sensitivity, that it permeates the whole atmosphere. You made me feel a part of it. I felt a sense of belonging.

Maggie McDonald's workshop, and her game of tool balderdash brought me face to face with my personal delusion of believing I know all there is to know about trades tools. Maggie handed out the tools for us to pick one we didn't recognize, and then to invent a use for it. I was sure I would have to disqualify myself. I would recognize them all. Well, I didn't. I felt panic and intimidation. I couldn't begin to invent a use for the tool she gave me.

Thanks Maggie. I now have a better understanding of what women may sometimes feel in trades and technology training, when we lack sensitivity and awareness concerning prior experience as compared to men.

Susan Booth's relational learning styles workshops have been the most profound experiences in my learning and teaching existence. I can think of no greater influence than hers. I know I am a better teacher and learner because of her. Thank you Susan.

Ottawa and Naramata was having a belief and sense of purpose reaffirmed. I now know in my heart what I feel and want to do is right. I have a deepened personal commitment to be part of bringing about equality for women. I will continue to help other men understand they too must share in the solution. Perhaps one day all men and women will come together in the spirit of Ottawa and. To experience the wonderful feeling of warmth, sensitivity, and love, to work together as equals, to listen, and to learn from each other.

Thank you all for being in Ottawa and Naramata, for the renewed sense of purpose, and yes, for the love.

-Terry is author of "What I Learned About Teaching and Confessions of an Electronics Instructor,"  
WITT Autumn/Winter Newsletter, 1991

## Employment Equity in tough times

- A workshop review by Grete Rasmussen,  
Designated Groups Coordinator, EIC

Paul Scott, Director, Human Resources Development and Employment Equity, Municipality of Metro Toronto provided an interesting look at how changes in hiring policy during a recession affect the Designated Groups: Women, Aboriginal Persons, Visible Minorities, and Disabled Persons.

He began by presenting the facts about three commonly held assumptions about the effects of recession and downsizing on Employment Equity:

1) While it is assumed there are no employment opportunities during a recession, economic restructuring actually means that new jobs are replacing old; there is always hiring, even in an economic downturn. The problem for members of Designated Groups will be entering the labour market at a much lower level. Hiring freezes are not always hiring freezes. People get hired on contract, for temporary jobs, etc. If members of designated groups get hired in these contract jobs this keeps them in unstable, peripheral work.

2) It is assumed that during a recession there will be fewer opportunities for Designated Group members. However, while special measures providing job opportunities for Designated Group members, such as internships, and developmental opportunities do seem to go, opportunities may come up out of the job sharing and voluntary retirements, which often are a part of a recession.

3) Since lay-offs are seniority based, it is commonly assumed that down-sizing will affect members of Designated Groups more. In fact, the second phase of a recession typically goes beyond belt tightening and involves job loss. While the effect of seniority clauses and lay-offs on employment equity may have been exaggerated, these issues are nevertheless real. Affirmative Action lay-offs have not held in the U.S. Paul Scott then went on to outline six dimensions by which one can measure a company's progress toward Employment Equity:

1) **Representation:** Are the Designated Groups equitably represented in the organization?

Can representation of Designated Group members be maintained even during lay-offs? If there is retrenchment, can it be equity focused? Can special programs, such as internships, still be used to hire Designated Group members?

2) **Authority and Decision Making:** Are members of Designated Groups equitably represented at levels where the real influence and authority reside?

Recession can focus hiring internally and this may give Designated Group members new opportunities. Flattening the management pyramid may bring Designated Group members suddenly into power.

3) **Occupational Distribution:** Are members of Designated Groups represented equitably in all occupational levels?

This really is a problem in many organizations. Do lay-offs & restructuring provide

opportunities for retraining, lateral moves etc., which may de-ghettoize some members of Designated Groups? Human Resource planning, training, can improve this situation.

4) **Job Security and Tenure:** Are members of Designated Groups represented in the organization, but not in the jobs with real security and tenure?

In times of lay-offs casual, part-time or temporary jobs go first. These job losses often go by unnoticed. They are typically held by women and visible minority members.

5) **Employment Conditions:** What is it like for Designated Group members to work in the organization? Do they stay?

A good outcome of cost-cutting may be such measures as voluntary job-sharing, part-time with benefits, which save dollars but also support work and family-life initiatives. Unfortunately, it is human resource planning, training, harassment and rights training which are the first things to go in a downturn.

6) **Pay and Benefits:** Do members of Designated Groups receive equal pay for work of equal value? Do they share equitably in benefits? Do the benefits address the needs of Designated Groups?

Paul Scott concluded with 6 elements required to develop and maintain Employment Equity, even in tough times:

1. An Employment Equity policy
2. Employment Equity goals
3. Union-management cooperation
4. Senior management commitment/preoccupation
5. A budget
6. Sound Human Resource Development policies and practices.

# Native Women in TTOs

By Pauline Mancuso/McDonald

**D**ona Racette (Regina Friendship Centre – Sask.), Sharon Benjamin (Conservation Officer – Yukon) and Pauline Mancuso/McDonald (General Machinist – Ontario) started out with some very discouraging statistical information on Native Women's social, economic, educational and organizational activity:

- 65.1% of single parent, Native women live below the poverty-line.
- 63% of these women are on some form of social assistance
- There is a 29% unemployment rate of aboriginal people.
- Aboriginal women are 40 times more likely than Non-Native women to be involved in liquor offences.
- There is clear over representation of status youth in the juvenile court/child welfare system.

All this in view of the fact that originally Native women were respected members of their communities, indeed, valued economic and practical players. Since the implementation of the "white" society rules Native women now find themselves at the bottom of the social ladder, economic ladder, political ladder; in fact, at the bottom of any ladder. Without taking anything away from our new sisters, it seems that Immigrant women have a better chance of survival in the "Canadian Mainstream" than Aboriginals. The decimation of the "Clan System" meant the dismantling of Native democracy and leadership.

Dona recommended two books for required reading which, in

part, document the Aboriginal perspective: "Knots on a String" and "Songs From This Earth on a Turtle's Back."

Although the formation of the National Aboriginal Management Board (NAMB) and the implementation of "Pathways to Success" are meant to address Aboriginal employment and training issues, Native women must also mobilize and organize (Nationally, Provincially, and Regionally) by means of building the numbers of Native Women's Associations and participating on these Pathways Boards.

Clear recommendations presented at the conference in view of National WITT's commitment to Native Women are:

- To promote Native women and their participation
- To request participation of Native Women's Associations re: events and meetings.
- To request time on meeting agendas of i.e. Native Women's Associations and Friendship Centres.
- Ask Questions: We will answer them to assist in breaking down the barriers. Don't let embarrassment or lack of knowledge inhibit your questions.
- For Native involvement, we must have representation at the table.

I think we all felt we could have used more time. The round table (Circle) discussion was just gearing up when we had to move on. I'm sure there were more questions that were waiting to be answered and maybe this newsletter is a way of beginning to do just that.

## Discover the possibilities conference

By Lin Hammill and June Sharp

**G**irls and women who study mathematics or the sciences in high school find few role models and even fewer mentors. Because they do not see a place for themselves many young women do not even consider careers in the sciences and technology. Simon Fraser University's annual "Discover the Possibilities" conference is an attempt to remedy that situation.

"Discover the possibilities" (formerly called "Women do Math") is a one-day conference on scientific and technological careers for young women in high school. Each conference has attracted between 300 and 400 female students and their teachers from all areas of British Columbia, though participants are predominantly from the Lower Mainland.

The conference attempts to attract both the best mathematics students (who may already be committed to a scientific career) and, more importantly, those who may be in danger of ending their high school math study before completion. Mathematics is the gateway to the sciences and technology. It is a prerequisite for entering such diverse fields as engineering, biology, psychology, accounting, and nursing.

A full day of interactions with women scientists, mathematicians and technologists lets them see they can have a place in the scientific community.

The conferences are a mixture of talks, workshops and oppor-

tunities for information discussions among women professionals and participants. The students attend two mathematical/science workshops and a careers workshop.

The math/science workshops emphasize the visually beautiful and interesting, and applications not normally thought of as mathematics. Workshops, most led by women, have included "Computer Animation on the Mackintosh", "Trains, Boats and Planes" (hands on opportunity to use tools and equipment used for maintenance of the Skytrain), "Physics is Fun!" (investigating the behaviour of everyday things from swings to musical instruments) and "Micro-organism Mystery" (how micro-organisms are used in the production of food such as yoghurt and wine).

In the careers workshops, participants are assigned life scenarios in which they calculate what it would cost them to live as they would wish. The result comes as a shock, as does the cost of child care. The workshops encourage participants to look at how educational and occupational choices affect the kind of jobs and earning power they will have.

The conference organizers had noticed over the years that the conference did not appear to attract Aboriginal participants. In order to remedy this situation the organizing committee for the March 7, 1992 conference asked members of the Vancouver Aboriginal community to assist us in increasing the participation of Aboriginal students. ... continued on next page

## *Discovering the possibilities... continued*

Gloria George, Wet'suwet'en hereditary Chief, and of lower Lillooet ancestry, and Barbara Wyss, coast Salish, were a tremendous resource of invaluable information, advice, suggestions and assistance. With their help we were able to attract over 50 Aboriginal participants, 15% of the total, which we considered very successful.

This success was due to the fact that we approached Aboriginal organizations and Indian bands directly (rather than relying on the schools as we do for other participants) and that we incorporated Aboriginal traditions into the conference.

Workshops on symmetry focused on traditional Aboriginal designs and included participation by Aboriginal artists. "The Natural Pharmacy" focused on ethno-botany and was lead by a coast Salish woman knowledgeable about the traditional use of plants for healing. A coast Salish Native Elder opened and closed the conference and we featured traditional Aboriginal food at lunch.

As a first-time effort, we were pleased most activities worked out well, and we plan to continue to make special efforts to attract Aboriginal participants.

In hindsight we realize we could never have achieved success

## **"The Advancement of Aboriginal Women's Equality Is Linked to Education"**

*— An Invitation from the Ontario Native Women's Association*

The Ontario Native Women's Association was founded in Thunder Bay in 1971, and is mandated to be a political advocacy association to speak on behalf of Aboriginal Women in Ontario. The ONWA addresses a wide range of issues including the discriminatory section of the Indian Act (Bill C-31), Family Violence, Native Housing, the Ontario Native Council on Justice, Employment Equity, the Equality Cause of Canada Act (1982), and Employment and Training issues. The ONWA belongs to the Native Women's Association of Canada.

Shirley Salt holds a new and exciting position with the ONWA. She is Project Manager of their Training Institute and is presently involved in the beginning stages of research and development. Salt sees a great deal of potential for Aboriginal women arising from the work of the Training Institute. "Our intention and mandate is to make this a full-circle educational centre that services the needs of Aboriginal women. Our goal and direction is to enhance Aboriginal Women's education, self-esteem, pride, and the feeling of being a complete person, so that she has the confidence, ability and knowledge to take her place in the workforce."

Salt's research presently focuses on daycare, on-campus housing, Native Traditional Teachers, Elders, Native Language, and Traditional Government. Once these needs are assessed full academic programming and curriculum will be explored.

The Training Institute of the ONWA would like to invite you to participate in this process by sharing your thoughts and experiences towards an Aboriginal Women's agenda on training. Send your story, the factors that have made your experience a negative or positive one, to Shirley Salt: Project Manager, the Training Institute, Ontario Native Women's Association, 115 North May Street, Thunder Bay, Ontario, P7C 3N8. Shirley can also be reached at phone: (807) 623-3442 or fax: (807) 623-1104.

in this objective without the active participation and support of Aboriginal representatives. It was an important experience in cross cultural communications for us and we gained some understanding of how to make our learning environment more supportive for Aboriginal students.

Conferences based on the "Discover the Possibilities" format are also held each year in more remote B.C. communities such as Terrace, Fort St. John and Kamloops. Called Ms Infinity, they are sponsored by the Society for Canadian Women in Science and Technology (SCWIST).

Simon Fraser University and SCWIST have received funding assistance for the conferences from the Government of B.C. and the Secretary of State.

More information about "Discover the Possibilities" can be obtained from Discover the Possibilities, Department of Mathematics and Statistics, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, B.C. V5A 1S6.

*— Lin Hammill is an Instructor in the Mathematics Department of Douglas College in New Westminster and a PhD Candidate in the department of Mathematics and Science at Simon Fraser University.*

*— June Sharp is Simon Fraser University's Employment Equity Coordinator.*

### ***My inherent right to belong***

*I sit and watch the evening news  
Everyday at six  
I see a roomful of politicians  
Addressing Aboriginal Reform  
And I look across at my white husband  
As he sleeps ...  
And I wonder ... Where is it I belong?  
Born to a Native mother  
My father? A white military man.  
So I've been around.  
Born on a reserve I was not allowed to call Home.  
A brother born in Germany ... A curiosity there!  
Five years in Quebec...labelled "Une savage!" there!  
I've been to every province and territory  
In this, our great Domain!  
But still I have to wonder...  
WHERE DO I BELONG?  
I found the status my mother had lost  
I returned to school, at what a cost!  
Completed my apprenticeship as a Machinist – The Shock!  
A Woman in Trades!  
A Single-parent Woman in the Trades!  
A single-parent NATIVE woman in the Trades!  
And STILL I wonder...  
WHERE DO I BELONG?  
My family is proud...  
My friends are proud...  
My husband is proud...  
My twenty-two year old son is proud...  
"You've come a long way baby!"  
But now I'm left wondering...  
WHERE DO I GO FROM HERE?*

*— Pauline Mancuso/McDonald*

## **SEXUAL HARASSMENT SEMINAR**

March 23 to 25 1992, over 300 employers, employees, union representatives, community groups and interested individuals attended three-hour seminars in St. John's, Gander and Cornerbrook, Newfoundland. Teleconferencing was also used to link other sites in Newfoundland and Labrador. Sponsored by the Provincial Women's Policy Office, the goal was to stimulate the development of clear sexual harassment policies and contract language for area businesses. Keynoted by Laura Traduck, a Toronto lawyer, with a panel of representatives from Newfoundland Power, the Federation of Labour Women's Committee, and the Human Rights Commission, the over-subscribed seminars kindled much dialogue and discussion, which can lead to the framing of new policies and language for union agreements. For further info: Women's Policy Office, P.O. Box 8700 St. John's, Newfoundland A1B 4J6. Phone: (709) 729-5009 Fax: (709) 729-2331.

## **BREAKING THE BARRIERS:**

*The 5th Canadian Conference Of Women In Engineering, Science and Technology • Ontario – August 14 and 15 1992*

Organized by the Canadian Association for Women in Science, and the Women in Science and Engineering Corporation, this conference will provide a forum for discussing educational and training needs and workplace barriers. Participants will walk away with concrete strategies on how to encourage more women to take part in these fields.

For information contact: 5th CCWEST, 6519B Mississauga Rd. North, Mississauga, Ontario L5N 1A6. (416) 567-9757.

## **CANADIAN VOCATIONAL ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

*British Columbia – October 28 - 31, 1992*

The theme for this conference is "Vocational Careers: Challenges and Opportunities."

By focusing on the challenges for education and training the 1992 CVA Conference will offer educators, representatives from business and industry, government officials, and other professionals opportunities to explore and debate the educational challenges

## **SUMMER INSTITUTE FOR UNION WOMEN**

*"Political Action for Union Women"*

*Vancouver, British Columbia – July 12 to 17, 1992*

Held for the first time in Canada this conference is to be hosted by Simon Fraser University, and the B.C. Federation of Labour. This week-long largely residential school of skill-building and information-sharing courses is committed to building alliances between women workers and overcoming obstacles of race, culture and sexual orientation. We would particularly encourage trades women, women of colour, and women from male majority unions to attend.

Attendance is open to 100 Canadian women and 100 American women. Registration \$342.40 CAD (includes all meals).

Accommodation is a nightly rate. For more information call Conference Services at SFU (604) 291-3420 or Mary Rowles at the BCFL (604) 430-1421.

facing us in these rapidly changing times. Victoria Conference Office: Camosun College, 4461 Interurban Road, Victoria, B.C. V8X 3X1. (604) 370-4000 Fax: (604) 370-3750.

## **GASAT 7: Transforming Science and Technology: Our Future Depends On It**

*Waterloo, Ontario - July 31 to August 5 1993*

Sponsored by the Ontario Women's Directorate, the 7th Gender and Science and Technology (GASAT) International Conference is to be held in Canada for the first time next year. These conferences have been a contributing force in the advancement of knowledge, understanding and program development on the issue of gender and science and technology. A call for papers is available. For information please contact:

The Ontario Women's Directorate, 480 University Avenue, 2nd Floor Toronto, Ontario. M5G 1V2. Phone: (519) 661-2083 Fax: (519) 661-2083.

## **MORE FROM THE GRASS ROOTS**

One of the workshops that was most powerful for me was the Homophobia workshop. It was both moving and very healing. I recommend it for the next National Conference, but even more importantly, at local meetings.

I also found the Aboriginal women's workshop very powerful. The three women who gave it were very proud and very clear in specifying what non-natives can do to support native women in trades and technology. Looking at three very different but complementary women, I was reminded that native women have as many different cultures within the term "native" as Europeans, and also of the fact that building is a tradition for native women. The women giving the workshop made it very easy for non-natives to hear what they had to say because they spoke without anger – or at least, had left their anger behind for that workshop. Several excellent recommendations came out of that workshop including workshops on unlearning racism for local WITT groups.

I enjoyed every workshop I attended but the other one that stands out is the one on American Employment Equity. I was shocked to hear that there are only 2% women in the building trades in the U.S. (*Ed: 15% women in the industrial trades.*) It really underlined that Affirmative Action must be accompanied by enforcement mechanisms. I also found the model of developer/ union/TTO group for getting more women into this work, an interesting one. (*Ed: Chicago Women In Trades/Stein & Company's Female Employment Initiative.*)

In general, I went to the Conference feeling somewhat jaded and worn out. I left feeling enormously optimistic about WITT as a national organization. I was tremendously moved by the spirit of good will and cooperation that was evident especially in the passing of the Structure Document, by the efforts of individual women to overcome personality conflict for the good of the organization and by the general spirit of reaching out and forming new alliances, such as in the Homophobia and Aboriginal Women workshops. My thanks to all who worked so hard for a wonderful "foundation building" conference.

*Kate Braid, Carpenter, Director of Labour Studies, Simon Fraser University, B.C.*

*Key Note Speaker of "Surviving and Thriving II"*

# *Regional Organizing and Training Boards*

## *- The Women's Reference Group's Call to Action*

With the development of new federal, provincial and local training and adjustment boards women's groups are being asked to respond to a multitude of policy initiatives and consultative processes. In some jurisdictions they have been systematically excluded from these discussions. It is important to find out at what point the development of local and provincial boards is in your area, who is spearheading the initiatives and to begin to engage with them to ensure your groups voice in the training allocations that will be taking place at the local level.

A clear objective of the Women's Reference Group has been to organize and position ourselves in such a way that we are not merely reacting to government initiatives, but clearly setting an agenda of our own. The Women's Agenda on Training (Resource Kit) describes in detail our efforts on this front. The Agenda is still in a developmental stage, being worked on by Barbara Anderson for the Reference Group. We hope to have it in Draft form for the June Annual Consultation with National Women's Organizations and Regional Women's Training Coalitions.

Women's groups have begun to organize around local training board issues on the regional and local level. We have already learned to some quite significant things about regional organizing. Following are some ideas which we hope you find useful in your work:

### *1) Resources for Organizing*

Women's groups have learned that, in order to effectively organize, resources are required to bring people together, plan, communicate, and develop accessible materials. It may be necessary to draw up a budget proposal identifying your regional resource requirements.

### *2) Steering Committee*

On the regional level there is no one way of organizing. Given that we all have different histories, organizational connections, coalitions, etc. the structure of regional steering committees are diverse. Here are some examples:

- N.B. has formed a coalition of 34 women's groups;
- In N.S., CLOW has taken the lead in organizing workshops around this issue, and in meeting with labour and government officials have taken the lead role and is organizing a workshop of broad-based women's groups;
- In Ontario, Advocates for Community Based Training and Education for Women organized a workshop with provincial women's organizations to establish terms of reference for a Provincial Steering Committee which include: reps from various sub-regions of the province, reps from diverse women's communities (women with disabilities, aboriginal women, racial minority women, refugee women, rural women) and women involved and experienced in Women's Access to Community-based Training, Apprenticeship, Non-Traditional Occupations. They are planning a forum (to be paid for by the Provincial Government!!) to discuss Representation, Accountability and the Women's Agenda on Training. None of these organizational forms are frozen; rather, they will change and adapt as the need arises.

### *3) Work with other Social Action/Equity Groups*

At the regional level we have learned how important it is to work closely with other social action/equity in this process. Many of our "communities" cross over and to a certain degree the divisions are false. Although we may have distinct experiences of the training system we can also identify common goals. We can support one another in our demands which builds our strength. For example, the people with disabilities have outlined standards re: accommodation. We support these standards as "Bottom-line" criteria for equitable representation and participation. We have found that often women from the immigrant and visible minority, persons with disabilities, and the aboriginal communities want to be represented directly in the Women's group. Their presence and leadership is central to our ability to work closely with the other equity groups.

### *4) Board officials/staff*

Government officials (CLFDB, CEIC, local board secretariats, etc.) have expected, and in some cases insisted, on participating in all the deliberations of the Social Action groups. The Women's Reference Group has maintained our own agenda, inviting government officials when appropriate/needed. Although they provide the resources, it is our process. In regional organizing we need to take the time to meet separately and to identify what we want from officials.

### *5) Our Training Needs*

We recognize that women's participation in this process also requires that we develop certain skills/expertise. In the "Detailed Guide to Local Boards", it states that resources may be provided so that constituencies can train our own representatives in skills like strategic planning, and can provide briefings on various facets of the training system, etc.

### *6) Existing Committees and Boards*

We have begun to think about the relationship between the developing boards and committees and pre-existing community decision making structures such as Community Futures Committees, CITC's etc. There are a number of examples of how existing structures entrench themselves and leave no room for a more representative system to develop. These pre-existing structures are being questioned by the CLFDB and equity guidelines will be recommended as a condition for future funding of Community Futures Committees. There is a lot of work ahead for us ... to work together at the local, regional and national level to ensure that these at the local, regional and national level to ensure that these guidelines become more than just "paper agreements" of the CLFDB.

### *The Nomination/Selection Process*

We now have the mandate of selecting representatives for local and provincial boards, committees and councils. Contact CLOW at (416) 699-1909 for a description of the process for nomination/selection that we used on the national level and the Job Description that we developed for the Women's Representative. Clearly, not all of it will be transferable to the regional or local level; but you may find pieces of it useful!

- At the National level Margaret Scopeck, has been hired as the equity staff person of the CLFDB. Also, Barbara Anderson is working with the Women's Reference on the Women's Agenda on Training. Both Barbara (416) 535-5455 and Margaret (613) 230-6264 are available to assist in regional and local organizing.
- If you have any learnings regarding national organizing you could like to share with others, please send write them down and send to Barbara Anderson, 217 Rusholme Rd, Toronto ON M5N 1E3 Res: (416) 535-5455 Fax: (416) 787-1500.

## *Your steps to a women's agenda on training ...*

- Read the resource kit, "Towards a Women's Agenda on Training". Order your copy from the Reference Group C/O

CLOW, 47 Main St., Toronto, Ont., M4E 2V6 (416) 699-1909.

- Send position papers, case studies, reports or other existing documents which talk about what women want and need from training to "Women's Agenda", c/o Women's Reference Group, 47 Main Street., Toronto, Ontario M4E 2V6.
- Write a letter, describing your own experience with training: as a trainer, a participant, an advocate ... or ...? Meet with community group/group of women and describe your experiences with the training system. Identify together the critical components of a Women's Agenda on Training.
- Contact a member of the Reference Group to discuss organizing a workshop.
- Identify existing networks and coalitions and participate in regional organizing...

## RESOURCES • RESOURCES • RESOURCES

➤ **"Personal Protective Equipment for Women: Addressing the need"** is a practical guide to a crucial workplace health and safety issue. It provides valuable information in the search for adequate protection for head, eyes, ears, hands, and body, and good tips on safe use and maintenance. It includes the personal testimonies of working women, including suggestions of how initiate effective changes in your workplace. All the major players, and the legal issues, are addressed. *"The Directory, Where to Find PPE for Women"* pulls out from the back of the book. Another great Change Agent Project from the Ontario Women's Directorate and the Industrial Accident Prevention Association. Order from the OWD: Consultative Services Branch, 480 University Avenue, 2nd Floor, Toronto, Ontario., M5G 1V2 Phone: (416) 597 4500.

➤ **"Taking Action, A Union Guide to Ending Violence Against Women"** is a joint publication of the B.C. Federation of Labour and the Women's Research Centre. Intended as a starting point for discussion and action within your organization, we recommend this handbook as informative reading for all women and men. *Taking Action* goes deep, responsively exploring inequities and violence in our culture. It profiles women's experiences; the kinds of abuse to which women are exposed; and their psychological impact. It contains practical suggestions for action in your local, union, or Federation. There are excellent sections on violence in the workplace, and how to help a support a co-worker who is being abused. A limited supply available from The Women's Research Centre, 101-2245 West Broadway, Vancouver, B.C., V6K 2E4. Bulk printings available on a cost recovery basis.

➤ **"She's Got Her Ticket,"** award-winning video at the Yorkton Showcase. SASK WITT and Live Wire Film and Video productions have collaborated on this 9-minute role-modelling video. It features working profiles of three enthusiastic women; a machinist, landscaper and a technologist, as well as great visual montages of women working in a variety of TTO occupations. The women share insights into the challenges and rewards of these careers in science, trades, and technology, and answer the questions many adolescent girls have about such futures. For boys and girls, aged 10 and up. Contact Live Wire Productions: 2050 Garnet St., Regina, Saskatchewan, S4T 2Z6.

➤ **The West Kootenay Women's Association** has produced a

**Role Modelling Kit** designed to assist both women who are acting as Role Models in the classroom, and teachers who are interested in trying to set up Role Modelling programs at their schools. The Role Models Kit is readable and answers many of the questions you might have about what kind of a presentation to give, the kinds of questions you might hear, how to prepare etc. The teacher's resource kit also includes a resource bibliography among the sessions. Both are well formatted and appear fun to use. Contact the West Kootenay Women's Association, 507 Hall Street, Nelson, B.C. V1L 1Z1 (604) 352-9916.

➤ **The National Film Board of Canada** has released their catalogue, **"Beyond the Image,"** films and videos about women's culture, politics and values. Their library of "work" offers 44 videos relating to women at work. Informative entertainment for yourself and your WITT group. Previews, rentals and purchases. Order the catalogue from Women's Marketing, D-5 National Film Board of Canada, P.O. Box 6100, Station A, Montreal Quebec., H3C 3H5.

## *Engineering study confirms need*

The Canadian Committee on Women in Engineering (CCWE) was formed to uncover the social and cultural barriers responsible for the under-representation of women in engineering, and to design bridges that will bring them as full participants into the profession. This mandate was reinforced by predictions that there will be a shortage of Engineers in Canada by the year 2000, and given great impetus by the deaths of the 13 female engineering students in Montreal, December 6, 1989.

"More Than Just Numbers," the report of the CCWE was released Tuesday April 7. It underlines the necessity for schools and workplaces to eliminate overt and subtle sexism. The report addresses its 29 recommendations, their strategies and timeframes for implementation, to primary and secondary school educators, and the educators, employers and associations of professional engineers. It includes the personal testimonies of engineering students and women engineers, and initiatives presently undertaken to recruit, retain and further the careers of Canadian women in engineering.

This relevant and constructive study is available in French and English at cost (\$25, including GST and handling). Order from the Northern Telecom-NSERC Women in Engineering Chair, Faculty of Engineering, University of New Brunswick, P.O. Box 4400, Fredericton, NB, E3B 5A3. Allow 6 weeks for delivery.



# THE THUMB



A page where we may celebrate our victories, recognize our peers, and encourage our advocates in TTO. A place to voice our disapproval for those initiatives which confront our sensibilities, and hinder our progress. Perhaps the perfect forum for a national letter writing campaign ... We welcome your submissions to The Thumb.

## THUMBS UP to...

👍 WITT National Network newly elected Regional Representatives and Advisory Committee members. The fires are kindling across the land!

👍 Grads of the Saskatchewan Carpenters Joint Training Committee Level 1 Carpentry Course, instructed by Denise Needham and Valerie Overend. This entire group passed their Level 1 exam, with marks between 78 and 89%. Way to go!

👍 Grads of the 1991 Gibsons, B.C. Women in Trades Course. 90% of these women are working or taking further training.

👍 To the inspiring video "She's Got Her Ticket", produced by SASK WITT and Live Wire Film and Video Productions. See resources for where to pick up your copy.

👍 Anne St. Eloi, Certified plumber and Plumbing Instructor at the British Columbia Institute of Technology for her new position on the Plumbers Union Executive.

👍 Ursula Franklin of Toronto. Researcher, teacher and public speaker, advocating the advancement of women in TTO who was awarded the Governor Generals Award in Commemoration of the Persons case.

👍 Dianne Simms, Master of Minor Waters, and the first woman to Captain a CN ferry across the St. Clair River!

👍 Canadian National Rail. CN is offering once more the Scholarship Programme for Women in TTO and Blue Collar Work. 58 Scholarships of \$500.00 are available at educational institutions across Canada. For more info, contact the Employment Equity Department of CN, P.O. Box 8100, Montreal, Quebec, H3C 3N4.

👍 Selkirk College of Nelson B.C. for contacting the local Women's Centre to encourage women to apply for entry into their nine month Electrical Entry programme. The programme commences in September 1992. For more information call Selkirk College: (604) 352-6601.

### May Call!

## Meeting of OWATC in Ontario

*The second meeting of the Ontario Women's Action on Training Coalition (OWATC) is to take place at the end of May. The purpose of this meeting is to bring together women from different sectors of Ontario who have different experiences with and within the training system – to develop and build on the Women's Agenda on Training and to build a response to newly developing structures, such as Local Training Boards and the Ontario Training Adjustment Board. To ensure equitable representation from the different sectors the OWATC requests those who may be interested in participating at the May meeting to contact Sarilyn Zimmerman of OWATC at (416) 783-2059.*

👎 To the Canadian Construction Assoc. Employment Equity programme for its vigorous promotion of WITT courses nation wide.

👎 International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW). The IBEW would like to receive your story and photograph for an edition of the IBEW journal which will focus on women in TTO. Please send to IBEW, 1125 15th St., N.W. Washington, DC 20005.

👎 The Provincial Government of British Columbia and the new Ministry for Women's Equality, for its core funding of B.C. Women's Centres in the amount of \$37,000.00 per centre this year!

## THUMBS DOWN to...

👎 Sinutab Daytime, for their sexist portrayal of an inappropriately dressed and hysterical woman, driving a loader, in a Nationwide advertisement. The caption reads "Finally there's a hot lemon remedy that lets you operate heavy machinery. (Assuming you know how)." Our thanks to Moe Lyons of Graphiti (our typesetter) for bringing it to our attention. Write: Parke Davis/Warner Lambert, 2200 Eglinton Ave., East Scarborough, Ontario, M1L 2N3.

👎 The Manitoba Ministry of Labour for removing Marilyn Kenny from her position, the only female Director of Apprenticeship in Canada, at a time when she was effectively both making changes to her own department and contributing to discussions on the national level with the Canadian Council of Directors of Apprenticeship.

👎 Employment and Immigration Canada for not approving funding for the National Data Bank Inventory of women in TTO, after providing \$60,000 for its design and development, and spending three years in negotiations with the WITT National Network.

👎 The Federal Government for its drastic cuts in English as a Second Language, changing the focus to settlement only and not workplace related, and eliminating related training allowances, which will have a devastating effect on immigrant and visible minority women. (See article)

👎 The proposed disbandment of The Women's Employment Counselling Unit in Vancouver. Letters insisting this very essential community service centre should not be closed can be sent to: Bill Gardner, Director of Operations, B.C. and Yukon, CEIC. P.O. Box 11145, Royal Centre, 1055 West Georgia, Vancouver B.C. V6E 2P8. CC: The WITT National Network. (Our letters worked last time for the WEC in Toronto!)

👎 Safety Smart! Magazine, of Penticton, B.C. This employee safety magazine chose to portray the only woman featured in its Feb/March edition dressed in high heels, tight sweater and hardhat. This graphic appears on the page entitled "Get Fired up about on-the-job housekeeping!" Thanks to Marie Tellier, VP of CN's Employment Equity Department, for bringing this to our attention. We're definitely fired up ... Bongarde Communications, 2315 Government. St. Penticton B.C. V2A 4W5.

# Cuts to language training for immigrants

Cuts to English as a Second Language (ESL) will impact severely on the lives of new immigrants, restrict those immigrants who have been in our country for over a year, and exclude Canadian citizens. The segregation of language training and labour market training, the shift of ESL labour market training funds to "Language Instruction for New Canadians" (LINC), and the elimination of training allowances for language training, raise serious concerns for immigrant and visible minority women, particularly those who do not qualify for UI.

LINC, the new policy announced January 7 1992, appears to have been developed without the input of past or future ESL recipients and trainers. EIC has put the cart before the horse once more in implementing policy without appropriate consultations with the Grassroots players. Eighty percent of EIC language training funds

## Bridges loses two important supports

Due to budget cuts at the City of Toronto, Bridges Program Managers Judy Klie and Elizabeth Bohnen's contract with the city ended on March 31st. WITT would like to thank them for their dedication and innovation in further developing the BRIDGES concept and moving it with enthusiasm and marketing skill into the public and private sectors across this country. Their work, along with Susan Booth, in preparing the BRIDGES manual and participants work book has provided Canadian industry with an extremely useful tool for moving female employees into TTO jobs, particularly in these times of restraint and downsizing. We wish them success in continuing to work with Industry as private consultants, forwarding many of the goals of the WITT Organization. We sincerely hope that the City of Toronto continues its leadership role in this area under the able direction of Eleanor Ross whom we welcome back from her leave. The BRIDGES manual and participants workbook will be reviewed in our next newsletter.

BRIDGES

**BRIDGES** is an innovative training program that helps women employees move from their traditional positions into trades, technology and operations work in their own organizations.

The **BRIDGES** Manual and Participants' Workbooks are together an excellent resource for all trainers and organizations who work with employment equity special measures programs.

The Manual contains:

- An explanation of how special measures programs can help you meet your employment equity goals
- A step-by-step plan for implementing **BRIDGES** in your organizations
- A detailed trainer's guide for classroom and shop training.

Program Manual and Trainer's Guide      **\$55.00\***<sup>†</sup>  
Participants' Manual                              **\$45.00\***<sup>†</sup>

Also available for Human Resources staff:  
Retention: Support Strategies for Women in  
Trades, Technology and Operations Work      **\$ 5.00\***<sup>†</sup>

To order, contact the **BRIDGES** Program  
Department of the City Clerk  
Information and Communication Services Division  
City Hall, 100 Queen Street West  
Toronto, Ontario M5H 2N2  
Phone: (416) 392-7410, Fax: (416) 392-1553

\* 7% GST will be added to the price.

<sup>†</sup> A postage and handling charge of \$2.00 will be added to mail orders.

will be dedicated to LINC. Twenty weeks is the maximum training an Immigrant will receive if deemed to be level 1. Entry level testing is on a scale of 1 (illiterate in own language), to 5 (fairly good English). ESL teachers are concerned that LINC's entry level testing is organized in such a way that most immigrants (who start at level 2 or 3) will receive only 12 to 14 weeks training.

Insufficiently trained immigrants may move to language classes in local schools, or to College Upgrading Programs where they will struggle to learn in an environment that is not designed to fill their needs. In both cases the funds to educate these people will become the responsibility of provincial and municipal tax payers. Twelve to 14 weeks will also not provide the basic understanding of English required for an immigrant to enter into the Labour Market Language Training Program (LMLT). LMLT has been allocated only 20% of the \$ for training budget. Job training programs for immigrants needing ESL will no longer receive job-training funds. Brian Conway, of the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI) groups said "This program is not designed to assist immigrants to enter the labour market as it does not provide job training or income support."

There are many concerns to be addressed. Who will deliver the programmes? Will immigrants learn the basic English skills they need in the LINC weeks provided? Will EIC provide follow-up mechanisms? Will only those with good understanding of English or skills currently demanded in the workplace, qualify for LMLT? Will training become increasingly privatized? What about

## The "F" Word

*I float in a bath that smells of roses, then slather myself in Magnolia skin cream.  
I wash my hands with anti-bacterial soap, then apply industrial strength barrier cream.  
I sit with a cat in my lap, cup of tea in hand and watch the Y & R at 4.40.  
I buy my coffee off the wagon, and read the "Beauty Myth" in my breaks.  
I knit a jumper for my sister's baby, due this year.  
I stand on a platform of the 15 ft high and 30 ft long converted diesel engine, as I kick it over and it rocks and shudders into motion.  
I tie back my hair in a silk scarf, with a flower print, I don my green uniform, heavy leather gloves and tuck my hair behind my ears before putting a yellow hard hat on.  
I rent "Casablanca" and cry at the end.  
I rent "Aliens" and cheer when Ripley takes control. They sneer and brand me a feminist.  
I smile and say, "It's my brand of feminism."*

Janet Adams  
Station Operator Gr. 1  
Water Pollution Control  
Metro Toronto Works Dept.

## Cuts... continued from previous page

childcare, and transportation. Why has LINC been removed from the jurisdiction of Local Training Boards? Already there are large waiting lists of immigrants in need of language training. In many cities EIC has not yet purchased college seats for government sponsored refugees. The new (LINC) policy does not propose any remedies to these present problems, indeed, it cripples the education and integration of all immigrants, especially women, LINC

cannot be merely a citizenship issue. It must be integrated with Labour Market training if we wish to eradicate the immigrant ghetto, and if we value quality of life of new Canadians.

What you can do: Fax your Provincial and Federal MPP's. Lobby them to re-examine the LINC policy, and to call a moratorium on this issue.

For more information contact Marilyn Hindmarch of CCASI Immigrant Programs at (416) 868 0770, or Karen Lior of ACTEW (women's programs).

# Surviving and Thriving II - The Sequel

Our sincere appreciation for the advocacy and invaluable contributions of the following sponsors and assistors of the WITT 1992 National Founding Conference:

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United Steelworkers of America  
University of Missouri  
Stein & Company, Chicago  
Transport Canada



The quotations on pages 4&5 of this newsletter are taken from the tables at the conference banquet. (We would have used more of them if we could have crammed them in.) They were chosen by Myrna Law-West of Portland, Ontario. Myrna provided well for our comfort and pleasure in her fine organizing of this memorable evening. The banquet was enhanced by The Company of Sirens, who provided such a wonderful expression of our struggle for equity, in their unique theatre piece. We were entertained, educated and moved by their performance. The Company of Sirens: (416) 975-9642.

*Electricity  
is that energy  
which is also  
the spark  
of Life  
Impossible  
to explain  
or even  
Understand*

Dawn Graham