

the Rose Vine

Unifor Local 2002 Women's Committee Newsletter

IMAGINE IMAGINE

Imagine leaving your home and moving across the ocean.

Imagine a complete loss of personal identity when you get there.

Imagine having very limited access to money to feed yourself and your children.

Imagine living in a small rural community with no car or driver's license.

Imagine having no control over your own body in dealing with doctors and hospitals in your new community.

Imagine needing a prescription for cough syrup when the most prescribed drug for women in your community is valium.

Imagine trying to raise your daughters in this environment.

This is the world my mother entered after my father was posted to Germany with the Canadian Armed Forces in 1975 with me and my two sisters.

We lived there for 5 years.

my mother was one of the very few women who had a driver's license and her own car. She was also one of the few women who had access to the household bank account and money. Most women were given an allowance for the household.

While this may seem a minor inconvenience, they were huge to these women left with no family support in a foreign country.

As a child, I remember waking up and my father was gone after a knock on the door and a pick up for him to go on "manoeuvres". Sometimes he would know in advance and sometimes not so we might not know where he was or how long he would be gone.

If a woman ran out of money while her husband was gone, she had to find a ride to the actual base, go to her husband's commanding officer (or whoever was left in charge) and ask for funds. Any money allocated was often accompanied by a lecture on better budgeting and family management.

While in Germany, my mother lost her identity as Gloria Schmidt, she became DW corporal Schmidt mf 602***** (Dependant Wife, my father's rank, last name, initials and his social insurance number). The children became DD (Dependant Daughter) corporal Schmidt mf 602*****.

This was especially evident in the hospital when my mother gave birth to my sister; no one used her actual name other than the other women in the ward.

A good friend of my mother had her tubes tied without her knowl-

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Why I'm a feminist

First of all, I'm surprised that I'm seen that way—as a feminist!

On the other hand, I'm not so surprised because I've always considered women my equals. Actually, I've never even asked myself that question, which I guess is evidence in itself.

For me, regardless of whether I'm talking to a woman or a man, it's not their gender that I see, but their intelligence.

I've certainly been lucky in my life. There are three women who have perhaps contributed to my strong sense of equality.

The first is my mother, a woman who, while loving, cheerful and tender towards her family, worked long hours, as did my father, and shared household chores.

Then there's my mother-in-law.

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Why I am a feminist—
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Although she was very much a product of her generation, devoting herself exclusively to household tasks (cooking, cleaning, etc.), she was nonetheless not afraid to say what was on her mind. She was very proud of herself and asserted her ideas with determination and the kindness that often only women can show.

And, of course, there is my wife, with whom I have shared my life for nearly 37 years. She has always defended her ideas and her way of doing things. When we decided to have children, we instinctively shared the responsibilities. I would get up to change

diapers at night and bring her the babies so she could nurse them. In the house, we divided up the chores according to what we liked doing best or what was easier physically. The chores were based on our respective abilities rather than on the label of father or mother.

Since I am often absent during the week, I am usually the only one who cooks on the weekend. Sharing with my wife comes naturally. I have developed a sense of equality with women. I often ask the men to help clear the table or to do the dishes after a meal at a friend's house, especially if the meal was prepared by the wife.

To be honest, I hate male and

female stereotypes and I try to deconstruct them every chance I can, naturally, without giving it a second thought.

I don't think I can take any credit for being the way I am. I don't need to think about it; I just do it instinctively, automatically. I often have impulses coming from deep within me when I see inequalities that push me to fight against those stereotypes.

I am a feminist by nature and without any effort: when I talk to someone, I listen to their words and their intelligence. Their sex is of no importance whatsoever.

– **Marcel Rondeau**

Imagine

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edge while having a C-section. Her husband had given his consent on her behalf.

No identity, no voice.

I remember my mother talking about how she was “encouraged” to be quiet and to be “supportive of her husband's career”.

Living under such systemic sexism was difficult and had a lasting ef-

fect on my parent's marriage. They divorced shortly after coming back to Canada.

Through all of this, my mother raised four strong, independent feminists. She taught us self-reliance, to be ourselves and to stand up for those who cannot. I owe my voice, self-confidence and activism to my mother who continues to be an amazing inspiration to me, my three sisters and her eleven grandchildren.

– **Kim Driedger**

“If you believe in equality for all genders you're a feminist. Simple,”

*Sociologist and author
(Angry White Men, Guyland)
Dr. Michael Kimmel*

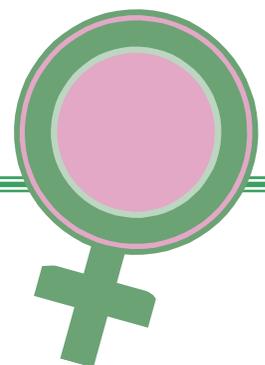
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We welcome your feedback. Comments can be sent to women@unifor2002.org

This publication is also available on our website at <http://www.unifor2002tca.org>

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Cette publication est également disponible en français.



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Relating to the RELAY FOR LIFE

On June 7, 2014, our team **CAME-CAUSE** was very excited to participate in this year's Canadian Cancer Society Relay for Life (Lachine, QC Sud-Ouest) because every step we take in the relay raises money to help to save lives.

So far we have raised \$7355 but it is not too late to donate and help fight the battle against cancer. You could still join us in the fight against cancer by supporting our team until August 2014.

Cancer does not discriminate; it robs us of our partners, colleagues, friends and family members.



The first lap of the relay was dedicated to survivors and caregivers. How touched we were because we could relate. We also came to the realization that whether you are a survivor or caregiver, getting involved helps to connect us with others who are facing similar challenges. It can also provide you and your loved ones the opportunity learn and have access to resources which would have been unknown to you.

The courage and strength of the survivors has inspired us

to continue to fight for a cure so that one day the "C" word is eliminated from our language

– *Carmelle Senosier*



Solidarity & feminism go hand in hand

I was born into a family that never told me that I couldn't do something I wanted to do just because I was a girl. My family didn't put obstacles in my path – I did.

From as far back as I can remember, I have always stood up against injustice. I didn't consider myself a "feminist" though, because in my mind feminists were hairy, bra-less and enraged against men. I think some men and women still think that way.

Then came the shock of December 6, 1989; my world was turned upside down by a crazed killer who murdered fourteen women and injured another ten women and four

men while claiming to be "fighting feminism."

I was 20 years old; I had been to the same CEGEP as some of those girls. If I had been more scientifically inclined, perhaps it could have been me. During the murderous rampage, one of the victims had cried out, "We're not feminists!" Attending an engineering school was not a feminist act for these women, they were just studying in a field that interested them. And yet, without the feminist movement, they would not have been there.

After this tragic event I started to pay more attention to the feminist arguments; I liked hearing different viewpoints. I listened to remarkable

feminists such as Francine Pelletier, Ariane Émond, Françoise David, Madeleine Parent and Hélène Pedneault who was particularly incisive, funny and pertinent – and often impertinent! Once, during a women's activist course at the Unifor Family Education Centre, I had the opportunity to meet her.

She told me, "Anger can be positive. It's important to get mad, because that anger can then become a driving force that allows you to go forward."

Since then, I no longer apologize when I'm angry; I use it to move forward.

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so helped me define myself more clearly as a feminist. The first time I was told I couldn't do something *because I was a woman* was during a union meeting. I was deeply shocked. This is not, nor has it ever been, the official position of our union. We have many allies among the male members of this union.

But there are still barriers, and since we live in a world that claims that we have achieved equality despite evidence to the contrary, we have to work even harder. We need to demonstrate the value of our cause to certain men, but also many women.

Solidarity and feminism go hand in hand. I am a proud feminist who is cheerfully angry and I invite you to join me in my future marches and battles!

– *Manon Camiré*



District 400 members in Montreal raise funds for homeless women

Manon Camire, Chairperson for District 400, brought a little sunshine into the Air Canada call center in Montreal recently.

With a little help from her friends, she organized a bake sale complete with tasty treats and palm trees to raise spirits and also money for a great cause.

La rue des femmes/Herstreet, is a non-profit organization based in Montreal, that has

been helping homeless women and women in distress for twenty years. The organization currently operates two houses where participants receive services and care to help them out of homelessness. A third house will soon be opened to meet the increasing needs for emergency shelter.

Unifor members at District 400 have so far raised over \$1200 for shelter.

Now that's sweet!



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Our daughters, ourselves; why I became an activist

When I was a young girl I did not think much about the obstacles that women faced.

As I got older, I went to the University of British Columbia and majored in French literature. One of the courses I took was Women's Studies. Later I began work at Hudson General, now Servisair, at the Vancouver International Airport. With almost 25 years of working, I have become more aware of issues affecting women.

Things came to light when I had an issue with a supervisor at work and felt that my opinion wasn't respected because I am a woman. As a vice-chair in the union, I voiced my opinion about a griev-

ance that needed to be resolved. The supervisor lost his temper, raised his voice, and completely dismissed my concerns. I felt he did this because I was a woman. I contacted my manager and explained the situation. When the supervisor was made aware of how he had acted he finally realized that he could no longer talk to women the way he had before and he apologized.

I would not want my daughters to experience what I went through. I tell them that no matter what the situation, no one has the right to disrespect them. They have been fortunate to attend some great labour programs offered at the Unifor family education centre in Port Elgin where the discussion

leaders are terrific and very inspiring.

The next generation, which includes my daughters, should not have to face the same barriers and prejudices that women before them have faced. This is why I got involved in the women's committee; I wanted to be part of an activist group that had the same passion to advocate for the rights and equality of all women.

By uniting and voicing our opinions, one day we can achieve true equality and social change and eliminate the challenges we face today!

– **Tina Gillales**



Dark days for women in New Brunswick

Women's rights have suffered yet another blow at the hand of our government with the announcement that the Morgentaler abortion clinic in Fredericton, N.B. must close their doors at the end of July due to lack of funding.

The announcement of the closure turns back time putting all New Brunswick women who deserve the right to safe and legal abortions at risk; in particular young and disadvantaged women. For 20 years the clinic has provided safe, affordable abortions for women from New Brunswick and neighbouring provinces who had access to the facility.

Abortion is not covered by Medicare in New Brunswick unless two doctors certify that it is medically necessary. The procedure is performed by a specialist in an approved hospital, leaving residents of New Brunswick with the most restrictive abortion policy in Canada.

This regulation has formed a potentially deadly barrier for women attempting to receive adequate health care in the province. Dr. Henry Morgentaler launched a lawsuit back in 2002 in a bid to force the provincial government to pay for the procedure. The case has remained in limbo in the court system and

will likely remain there, due to the death of Morgentaler in May 2013.

Unifor activists in New Brunswick have attended every rally since the announced closure of the Morgentaler clinic. They will continue to lobby against the discriminatory and medically unjustifiable requirements imposed by the New Brunswick provincial government. We will continue to work with community groups to fight for pro-choice regulations and progressive approaches to women's bodies and lives.

– **Tammy Moore**

***El Salvador** is one of seven countries in Latin America and the Caribbean that considers abortion a crime and convicts women of aggravated murder.*

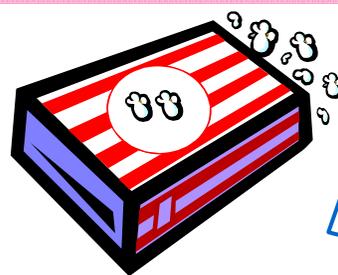
Seventeen women are among those imprisoned in El Salvador for having abortions in a country where the procedure is outlawed in all circumstances.

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May we recommend...



Books



Movies

HOWEVER LONG THE NIGHT by Aimee Molloy

The unlikely and inspiring story of Molly Melching, an American woman whose experience as an exchange student in Senegal led her to found Tostan and dedicate almost four decades of her life to the girls and women of Africa.

THE CONFIDENCE CODE

by Katty Kay and Claire Shipman

Which is more important: confidence or competence? Why do so many women, even the most successful, struggle with feelings of self-doubt? The authors deconstruct this essential, elusive, and misunderstood quality and offer a blueprint for bringing more of it into our lives.

How confident are you?

Take the quiz:

<http://theconfidencecode.com/confidence-quiz/>

Fiction:

THE SILENT WIFE by A. S. A. Harrison

Jodi and Todd are at a bad place in their marriage. He is a committed cheater, she lives and breathes denial. A chilling psychological thriller about a marriage, a way of life, and how far one woman will go to keep what is rightfully hers.

THE EMPTY ROOM by Lauren B. Davis

Told with compassion, insight and an irresistible gallops humour, The Empty Room takes us to the depths of addiction, only to find a revelation at its heart: the importance and grace of one person reaching out to another.

IT'S A GIRL This grave documentary spotlights the cultural traditions that surround widespread female "gendercide" and violence against women in India & China.

BLOOD BROTHERS This inspiring film documents the challenges a young American man faces and the love he finds as he helps children with HIV and AIDS in India. (Inspiring to male and female audiences)

EDIE AND THEA: A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT

Edith married her partner of 42 years, Thea Spyer, in Toronto in 2007. When Thea passed away in 2009, Edith was billed over \$300,000 in federal estate taxes. In 2011, at the age of 81, Edith Windsor sued the United States government and won. Edith Windsor and Thea Spyer's love story was chronicled in this moving documentary.

Unifor 2002

Women's Committee

Pacific Region - Tina Gillales
Western Region - Kim Driedger
Central Region - TBA
Eastern Region - TBA
Atlantic Region - Maria Doumakis
Cheryl Robinson - Executive Board Liaison

Women's Advocates

Air Canada

Atlantic Region - Nancy-Anne Rockwell
Eastern Region - Ginette Martin
Central Region - Vicky Alexandris
Western Region - Leanne Sookram
Pacific Region - Jean Dube Demeule

Aeroplan

Montreal - Carmelle Senosier
Vancouver - Erin Draper

Jazz CSA/ACS

West - Linda Gagnon
East - Donna Buchan
Bilingual - Mireille Voyer

Hilton Saint John

Peggy MacGougan-MacDonald

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