

news

Steinem inspires at Cohn

by Emily Macnaughton

A crowd of women and a few men packed the Rebecca Cohn Auditorium Sunday night. Feminist author and activist Gloria Steinem ushered in International Women's Day with the first talk of her week-long Canadian tour.

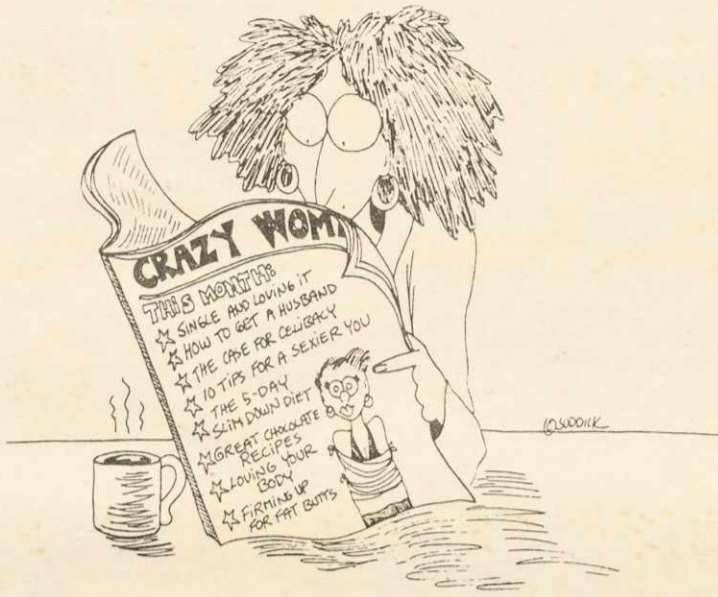
The co-founder of Ms. magazine, and icon of modern American feminism, Steinem began the evening speaking on "Personal is Political"—that self-esteem and self-knowledge are crucial to the success of political movements, a topic of her recent book "The Revolution from Within".

Despite a winter cold, Steinem managed to fire up the enthusiasm and emotions of the crowd with the revealing, challenging content of the two part evening.

In the first half, Steinem linked child-rearing practices to the rise of democracy, citing childhood's influence on past, present and future world leaders. Stalin was a sadistically abused child and in turn became a cruel leader; Gorbachev was more gently bred and became a flexible and compassionate leader. Good parenting promotes peace.

"The only form of arms control lies in how we raise our children," said Steinem. By taking on the roles of both genders in parenting, men and women become "whole parents". This changing vision of sexuality "challenges racism and patriarchy at the root".

The second part of the evening was an "organizing" period in which Steinem urged the audience to network and form small consciousness-raising and support groups to examine the politics of childhood. "Feminism is now too large an organization," she said, "small groups began the Women's Movement. We need a new 90's version of the original movement".



People of all ages charged up to the microphone to praise Steinem, make announcements and tell powerful personal stories. "It took me until 1988 to call myself a feminist," said one woman, "Since then, I've been ridiculed and rejected more than ever before and have never felt better about it." One man said he consid-

"arms control lies in how we raise our children"

ered Steinem a quack before his sister brought him to the talk. "Now, I think that if you're a quack, I'm a quack," he said. "Thanks," responded Steinem, "and I thank your sister."

Despite the infectious enthusiasm generated by Steinem, people talked more about the audience than the speaker as they left the auditorium. "There is a great feeling of comradery

here," said one woman, "It's very empowering being in a room with so many women with the same feelings".

People wanting to form support groups met in the lobby as others lined up to get books autographed. High school student Erin Oakes made contact with other students interested in forming a women's group at the high school level; she was suprised to find members from other Halifax organizations approaching her to offer encouragement.

Overall, the evening showed the strength of Nova Scotia's feminist community and proved that the feminist movement is still vital and growing. "We're only 25 years into the second wave that will probably last another hundred," said Steinem. MC Mary-Jo Anderson seemed to sum it up, "To those who say that feminism is dead, I'll say as Mark Twain, 'the rumours of our death are greatly exaggerated'".

Metro area junior and senior high school students interested in forming a women's group can contact Erin Oakes at 864-8579.

OT reaches out to kids

by Elisabeth Crosby

The children look forward to "Kid's Day" at Dalhousie's School of Occupational Therapy with eager anticipation. One parent compared it to Halloween, saying that they remember every detail about the event last year, and the years before. One five-year old explained to her big sister, who was attending the fun-day for the first time, "The footprints will take us right to the fun!" She was referring to the cardboard feet placed strategically from the entrance of the Forrest Building to the registration desk for "Kid's Day".

"Kid's Day" is an annual event at the School of Occupational Therapy. This year it was held on Saturday, March 5. The students organize a fun day for kids with disabilities and other children, usually their siblings or

children of faculty members.

"Kid's Day" is an "integrated play" experience. The activities are modified to suit the children's capabilities. For instance, if a chosen activity was Simon Says, and some of the

fish, mermaids, surfers and dancers

children were unable to use their legs, none of the actions would require moving their legs.

The day was almost cancelled this year due to bad weather. Eventually, ten of the 26 children invited arrived and the activities began. Despite the

cold weather, children and student occupational therapists alike had an enjoyable "Caribbean Theme" day. All the students wore costumes (some were fish, mermaids, surfers and dancers) or tropical outfits (shorts and shirts, brightly coloured).

Not all university students sleep in on Saturday morning. This is just one example of some students who give up one morning a year (and many months of preparation) to give children a wonderful day. I challenge others to share what they do for the community that surrounds our university. Perhaps we can show that we are not as self-engrossed as everyone thinks - that we do stand for something besides books and personal gratification. Let everyone know that we are caring, compassionate and willing to reach out to those around us in need.

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