

SWAN Newsletter

Volume 9 Issue 5

November 2009

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ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE 2009-2010

Facilitator

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Secretary

Marilyn Godley

Asst Secretary

Catherine John

Treasurer

Barb Godfrey

Speaker Co-Ordinator

Cath John

Membership Secretary

Heather Phillips

Newsletter Editor

Heather Boundy

Public Officer

Barb Godfrey

Website Co-ordinator

Rosemarie Draper

Committee

Gwen White

Pauline Young

Members
welcome to
attend Committee
meetings.



Southern Women's Action Network Inc.
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Sabra Lazarus—November 15th. 2009 Homelessness on the Mornington Peninsula



Sabra Lazarus is the Community Health and Well Being Development Officer at the Mornington Peninsula Shire. She was instrumental in writing the report *Speaking home truths: homelessness on the Mornington Peninsula 08*. Across Australia, and on the Peninsula, homelessness is becoming an increasingly urgent social issue. So while we as a community celebrate the abundance of the Peninsula, its natural beauty, the social, cultural and economic opportunities it delivers, for many of its residents and visitors, there is another less celebrated Peninsula landscape. This is a place where individuals, families and sections of the community, increasingly experience the acute pain of an economic and social system that is so dysfunctional that it is unable to facilitate the basic necessity of life; shelter which is safe, affordable, appropriate and accessible. Peninsula people are homeless; they do live in unsafe and inappropriate housing – cars, tents, benches, dilapidated houses, housing where family members can be subjected to the violence of others, housing that is insecure and unaffordable.

People who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness, live in environments that play havoc with their health and well being and can cause physical and mental ill health. They live in places and spaces that can exacerbate their vulnerability, and position them socially on the 'other' Peninsula - where you are likely to be excluded from community life and where you are more than likely to be forgotten.

2010 SWAN Committee

A huge thank you to retiring SWAN Committee members Susan Blackburn, Janice Gray, Anne Johnstone and Jeanine Barnden. Susan has been the friendly, welcoming face leading our meetings for the past three years. She has also worked tirelessly behind the scenes, promoting the work of SWAN and updating policies and procedures to ensure the smooth running of our group. Janice has been on the committee for seven years, acting as both Secretary and Treasurer during that time, and also co-ordinating the purchasing and running of the kitchen for our Morning Teas—we hope the wonderful muffins still make an occasional appearance! Anne has been on committee for just one year but has arranged some wonderful speakers this year in her role as Speakers Co-Ordinator. Thank you all for jobs so well done—your experience and expertise will be missed on Committee.

Many thanks to new committee members Carol Morse, Gwen White and Pauline Young for putting your hands up. A special thanks to Carol for taking on the role of Facilitator in her first year, to Barb Godfrey for upgrading from Public Officer to Treasurer, Cath John for becoming Speaker Co-Ordinator, Gwen White for becoming Newsletter Assistant Editor and Pauline Young for taking over organising Morning Teas. We look forward to more wonderful SWAN occasions.

Joan Kirner—September Speaker



SWAN member, Judith Graley MP, proudly introduced our September guest, Joan Kirner, as someone who had been to her, and to many others, both an inspiration and mentor. Joan has kept her profile as a *female* politician long after her days in government were over, working tirelessly in support of others and the community. In response Joan thanked women like Judith, and Mornington Shire Mayor, Anne Shaw, for keeping the circle of feminism going. Her passion is for government to be truly representative, and for this simple justice to occur at least 50% of our representatives ought to be female. We have recently celebrated the centenary of female suffrage in Australia, and much progress has been made in that time, yet still we find the situation where most women are placed in marginal seats where the chance of success is slim. By the 1990's there were over 1200 men in parliaments across Australia to only 50 women! Hence the founding of Emily's List in 1994, when Joan and Carmen Lawrence, realizing that it was crucial to have the support of leaders, targeted Paul Keating at the ALP Conference with the idea that the ALP should aim to have 35% of winnable seats going to female candidates. This affirmative action led to the situation where the number of ALP women in government rose from 60 in 1994 to 160 in 2008. Important reforms initiated by women in recent years have included Paid Family Leave, the Mercy Petition in support of women suffering from violent abuse, and Abortion Law Reform. Joan believes that similar affirmative action needs to take place in the business world if we are to increase the number of female CEOs from the present 4% representation. Joan's presentation was very warmly received by SWAN members.

Housing is a basic Human Right. Every woman, man, youth and child has the human right to a secure place to live, which is fundamental to living in dignity, to physical and mental health, and to overall quality of life. The Human Right to Housing is explicitly set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Despite this recognition over 1 billion people worldwide live in inadequate housing and 100 million are homeless.

THIS and THAT

Frankston Community Day Out—November 14th. 1.00 - 4.00pm Frankston Council, together with the Youth Resource Centre and New Hope Foundation invite you to a day out at Ballam Park with a special invitations to recently arrived refugee families. There will be workshops, basketball competitions, a jumping castle

and free sausage sizzle. Helpers are need on the day. Please contact Jana Runge if you can help on 8781 5911

WANTED—Picture Story Books The Asylum Resource Centre in Dandenong are desperate for picture story books to assist refugee families to learn English. Please bring books along to the next

SWAN meeting if you have any you would like to donate.

Thank You

While we are usually a male-free zone, special thanks must go to David Gray (Mr. Janice) for helping us with setting up the chairs and tables for each meeting. **Thanks David!**



A Recommended Good Read

Little daughter: a memoir of survival in Burma and the West by Zoya Phan.
Find out about the realities of life for the Karen and other people from



RSVP
for all meetings to:
Heather—9787 8532
Heather—5974 2303

September SWAN Meeting

Joan Kirner makes a welcome return appearance at Guest Speaker at SWAN. She was welcomed by former Shire President and now MP, Judith Graley. Councillor Anne Shaw, Mayor of Mornington Peninsula Shire kindly chaired the Annual General Meeting..

Joan Kirner, AM with Judith Graley, MP, and Councillor Anne Shaw.



Retiring SWAN Committee members Janine Barndon, Susan Blackburn, Anne Johnstone and Janice Gray.



A vote of thanks to Joan from Jane Clarke

SWAN Banner

Did you notice our beautiful new banner at the September meeting?

For some time the committee has been hoping to arrange for the design of a banner which can be used, not just at regular SWAN meetings, but at community events with which we are involved.

It makes a difference to have an artist on our committee who was able to visualize our ideas and design something so attractive.

Many thanks to Cath John for designing and organizing the production of the banner on behalf of SWAN.



SHARE TABLE

If you would like to speak to any item you have placed on our Share Table please speak with Susan Blackburn before the meeting.

WANTED

Pauline and Gwen would welcome any willing hands happy to help with setting out Morning Tea at SWAN meetings. If you can arrive at 8.30am to assist with the set up you would be welcomed with open arms! Our members really appreciate that hot cuppa on arrival. Donations for the raffle are also welcome.

Supatra Masdit at the IWD Conference in New York (as quoted by Joan Kirner)

"...it is necessary to form a critical mass of women holding political power, 40/60 or even 50/50: slogans like these are catchy and get us applause but what does it really mean? 50/50 or fht esame kind of politician? I don't think we mean that we would like to have the same kind of politicians, only that they are women. This is not just about putting more women in public office, is it? This is about using power to bring about the transformation of structures."

Supatra is a senior female Thai politician who has been elected as an MP seven times since 1979. She engineered the establishment of Thailand's National Commission on Women's Affairs.

SWAN



SUNDAY

15 NOVEMBER

SABRA LAZARUS



"I'll be 70 next year. And I don't need this. Although now it has happened and I have set my mind to selling my unit, my cabin, I'm looking forward to moving on. I don't know where to, I have no idea where I am going or what I am going to do, but I'm looking forward to moving on. I will soon go through the money I get for this because I will have to pay high rents for units etc and then I don't know what will happen but I have lost my security by having to sell, but yet I am looking forward to moving on, even at my age, even though I didn't think...I thought this was it."
Stella, Community Consultation

"We focus on weakness rather than strengths, homeless people have amazing talents and amazing skills. People can take a superior stand...there is a big stigma. But the person can be a father, a lover - a human being, not just homeless but a lot more."
(Indigenous Housing Worker, Community Consultation 2007)

THREE WISE WOMEN
WOULD HAVE...
asked for directions,
arrived on time,
helped deliver the baby,
cleaned the stable,
made a casserole,
brought practical gifts...
and there would be
PEACE ON EARTH.

Meeting Dates 2010

You might like to put these dates in your diary for next year:-
March 21st., May 16th., July 18th, September 19th and November 21st.

For any suggestions for fabulous and interesting women to speak with us please contact Cath John on 5974 8637.

Your **RSVP** is not essential but helps us greatly in catering. Why not introduce a friend to SWAN next year? New faces are always welcome.

Venue: Meeting Room
Shire Offices, Queen Street,
Mornington
9.30AM — cost \$7

BOOKINGS PLEASE
RSVP BY
FRIDAY 13 November
HEATHER PHILLIPS 9787 8532
heatherphillips4@bigpond.com
or
HEATHER BOUNDY-5974 2303
heather@boundy.biz