

Grannies on the Hill and Around the Region

by Pat Evans

The excitement and relief that met the news that the sponsorship issue was resolved and transferred to Paul Dewar was also mixed when we heard that the second hour of debate and the vote were moved forward. YIKES! a number of us said when the new dates (March 3rd for the debate and March 9th for the vote) were announced because it eliminated almost three weeks from our advocacy time.

But grandmothers/others are made of stern stuff and we fanned out and saw MPs in their Parliament and constituency offices. Members of the Hill Team and many from granny groups across the region visited MPs, wrote to MPs and made our voices heard in many and myriad ways. This includes letters to the editors and articles for community newspapers--but it also includes other creative efforts. Rumour has it, for



Pat Evans, Capital Grannies, Brian Masse (MP for Windsor West and the MP carrying the sponsorship of the Bill after the original sponsor resigned and before MP Paul Dewar took over,) Ilse Turnsen, Wakefield Grannies and Sharon Swanson, Lanark County

example, that one gran finding herself on the same plane as Michael Ignatieff and suffering from laryngitis, wrote him a detailed note about the importance of the one-license solution and why he needs to show leadership on the issue..... Grannies are everywhere---hard to hide from us!

But the truly wonderful news is that these efforts appear to pay off and there is the real possibility that at least one of the Conservative MPs formerly opposed may support the Bill. As we expect that the Bill will pass/fail by a razor-thin margin, a shift from the 'no' to 'yes' column is truly significant.

Watch for an urgent action call in the next few days as we come down to the wire--March 9th! And let's have a grand turnout on the Hill for the debate and the vote!

AFRICAN GRANDMOTHER

by John Blakely

African grandmother
African queen
Aged through such darkness
The things that you've seen
But you are black beauties

With tears on your cheeks
African grandmother
African queen
African grandmother
African love
That we might listen
And help those black doves
That care for dying children
Raise grand kids on knees
African grandmother
African queen.

John Blakely, an Ottawa poet and writer, was inspired to write this poem upon hearing Jennifer Baniczky speak about the plight of African grandmothers. They are friends, who see each other most Saturdays at the Shepherds of Good Hope Soup Kitchen. John is particularly interested to hear about the Canadian grandmothers lobbying for Bill C-393.