

The Total Woman Show: A Minority Report:

One man among hundreds of women; does anyone else find it warm in here?



There weren't many men at the Total Woman Show at Bingeman's on Feb.11-12, 2006 but this writer interviewed several totally female attendees who made any gender feel welcome.

The Total Woman Show, held at Bingeman Park in Kitchener this month is dedicated to the health, wellness, and fitness of the female side of our species. There were over 120 exhibitors who set up Friday and manned, or should I say peopled, their booths from 9:30 am to 5:30 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday. In addition, there were eight speakers, ten workshops, and fifteen demonstrations over the two days, plus twenty-eight draws for prizes. That was a lot of stimuli for a \$10 ticket, 10% of which went to support Women's Crisis Services of Waterloo Region.

Carolyn Parks of Creative Events greeted exhibitors with sincere equanimity, guiding them to their allotted booths, and pleasantly trouble-shooting for the presenters all weekend. She had 25 volunteers to help her in a real community effort. Every now and then in the corridors outside Marshall Hall, bright television lights would be switched on for CKCO interviews with Lia Rosekat. It was a happening place for over 2,000 people in attendance.

Hundreds milled about casually checking out offerings that ranged from Tibetan jewelry to self defense to careers in the Armed Forces which are 17% female. Suddenly the subdued enquiries at booths; such as OP Water Systems promoting pure tap water through oxygenation, or Radiant Saunas extolling the benefits of personal infra-red saunas to improve toxin release, would be overshadowed by the increased decibels from scheduled speakers on the main stage. It could be Adele Alfano, among Canada 's top 100 powerful women, striking a vein by exhorting sisters to mine their inner diamonds; or Mary Taylor, from the exotic entertainment industry, confiding that women can uncover their hidden strippers. If that was too much food for thought, then you could wander into the hall to see what was cooking... Maribel Linfield, the Food Diva, that's who. She did eight shows including recipes for chocolate truffles and Stilton grapes with toasted pecans that gave new meaning to Diana Krall's seductive lyric "peel me a grape".

I got down to some interviews, talking to Katherine who promotes wellness by sharing her experiences and research about "common-sense health". A cancer survivor herself,

she believes in infrared saunas as the scientifically-proven, better way to remove toxins with non-ultra violet rays and deep tissue heat, out-performing conventional saunas by at least 5 times. She simply wanted to tap into the 2,000 to 4,000 expected visitors to the show to increase awareness and knowledge of her method of taking 30 minutes a day in a sauna.

Another exhibitor, Manisha, is the Niagara region's Entrepreneur of the Year for Emerging Business. She markets her self-publishing team at these shows because typically 4% of visitors will stop, and of those, 10% will become clients. On this year's attendance, that means that she might get 10 clients from a weekend show, or potentially 10 self-fulfilled women who publish their first novel.

One husband and wife team, Jan and Jim, claimed to have found a veritable fountain of youth in a 1000 year old Tahitian fruit. Jim said that by drinking 2 oz. a day for 8 days, his joints got well enough to let him get back to running again. I overheard one skeptical woman wonder what else he put into his drink. Jan responded, "Here look, I have a survey of 25,000 people and 80% noticed positive results." "Positively bonkers, maybe," the English visitor harrumphed and moved on, unhealthy and unwell apparently.

Speaking of drinks, I checked out the Distinctly Tea booth. Carolyn was offering the latest wonder tea- rooibos from South Africa . It has no caffeine and a mugful of benefits, from reducing irritability to slowing the aging process, which does tend to irritate people, doesn't it? I asked if rooibos can still make a good cup of tea from bad water and a metal teapot. She said conspiratorially, "You know, water does make a difference." So we both went to check out the OP Water booth.

OP stands for Ozone Purified, so Kevin, one of the few men at the show, told us. "The United Nations has declared 2005-2015 the Decade of Water," he said, "and ever since Walkerton it has become painfully clear that drinking water, especially in rural areas, is unsafe. This system adds oxygen to water in a federally-approved method that disinfects and purifies water supplies to every tap in the house." He came to the show to target women because, "They are the ones in the household concerned with health, the environment, and," he winked, "they are the main decision-makers for the home." Distinctly Tea lady nodded and I didn't argue.

It was a well-attended event, woman-oriented but gender un-biased. Little did I know that I would get to experience calorie counting, sip a fiddlehead puree for genuine health, and witness feminine mystique by a real magicienne.

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