

GREAT LAKES LIFE

POWER TO THE WOMEN!

OCTOBER, FROM THE LATIN 'OCTO' MEANING EIGHT, FOR THE EIGHTH MONTH (OR THE EIGHTH BABY, IF YOU'RE OCTO-MOM). BUT IT IS ALSO A MONTH FOR THE WOMEN IN OUR LIVES. OCTOBER 5 IS INTERNATIONAL WORLD TEACHERS' DAY (WOMEN TEACHERS ARE ALWAYS THE MOST MEMORABLE). OCTOBER 11 IS NATIONAL COMING OUT DAY (ALTHOUGH YOUR MOTHER ALREADY KNEW). OCTOBER 31 IS THE SACRED HOLIDAY OF HALLOWEEN (WHEN MOM DRESSED YOU UP AS A SPIDER WITH EIGHT FABRIC LEGS). OCTOBER IS ALSO WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH, GIVING TEACHERS A CHANCE TO TELL THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STORY, AND IT'S WOMEN'S HEALTH MONTH, ENCOURAGING US TO UNDERSTAND HOW WOMEN'S HEALTH IS VITAL TO COMMUNITY HEALTH. IT'S ALSO BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH, BUT THAT'S NO EXCUSE TO WEAR PINK EVERY DAMN DAY. THIS OCTOBER, REMEMBER THE IMPORTANT WOMEN IN YOUR LIFE... OR TRY TO BE ONE!

PLACES TO FIND POWERFUL WOMEN (OR BE ONE):

THE CLEVELAND FIRE DEPARTMENT TRAINING ACADEMY

www.city.cleveland.oh.us

BURNING RIVER ROLLER GIRLS DERBY

www.burningriverrollergirls.com

THE CHAMBERS OF CLEVELAND CITY COUNCIL

www.clevelandcitycouncil.org

YMCA TRAINING PROGRAMS

www.ywca.org

WOMEN'S WORK

Learn about global fair trade firsthand on October 9 at the Ohio Fair Trade Expo, held at John Carroll University. Cecilia Appianim, a 53-year-old cocoa farmer from Ghana, Africa, will share her story and the impact fair trade has made for her and her community – especially the women. Appianim resides in a small village in central Ghana where the main employment is cocoa farming, though families also grow subsistence crops such as cassava and plantains. When asked to describe the impact of fair trade certification on her community, Appianim said:

"Fair trade has helped us a lot. Because of fair trade, women can come out boldly and take part in every event. Before it was not like that. Before we would stay at home and watch the men. And we would work with our husbands, and they would take the money, put it in their pockets, and when it came time to buy food or pay school fees they would say the money is gone. But Kuapa, as a fair trade farmers' cooperative, has opened our eyes to see that everything should be 50-50. So if a man has one vote, a woman has one as well. If the men come together to make a decision, then the women are there to take part as well. So now we are empowered, and the men they cannot cheat us again. Kuapa Kokoo has many projects for women. We make soap, T-shirts, batik. We grow other food to sell in the market and then put some money into the credit union for hardship times or to pay our children's school fees."

By simply making the decision to buy fair trade clothing, coffee, chocolate, bananas, flowers, and other locally available goods, you can make a huge difference in the lives of women halfway around the world. The all-day expo includes lectures, workshops, training, fair trade shopping and of course samples of coffee and chocolate.

JCU Dolan Science Center, University Heights, (216) 961-0003, www.ohiofairtrade.com.



SPEAK UP, SPEAK OUT

Join power creative's Shelly Gracon-Nagy and Maria Miranda at She Speaks, a monthly, themed spoken-word and works-in-progress event, usually held at Visible Voice Books in Tremont. Performed by women but open to everyone, the events give women an opportunity to network, commune and test new and first-time work in a public forum. In September, members of Whisper to a Scream, the feminist theatre collective that hosts *She Speaks*, performed at IngenuityFest, under the Detroit-Superior Bridge. On October 23 at 7:30 p.m., She Speaks returns to the indie bookstore, outside in the brick-paved wine garden if the weather is right, and women of all levels of experience are welcome to perform. Previous events have included local songstress Corissa Bragg, attorney Leslye Huff, activist Brynna Fish, and Angelisa Crognales of Early Girl. Free.

1023 Kenilworth Avenue, Cleveland, www.whispertoascream.org.

OBEY

After a three-decade-long career in occupational therapy, Shellie Sedlak retired, began volunteering for arts organizations and spending her summers at Chautauqua. And looking for a soul mate. She's attractive, smart, funny, and well connected, but the search for that special one hasn't panned out. I joke to her that it's because of her tough-Jew-from-Long-Island accent. It's not from lack of socializing. Sedlak is seen at all the right parties. She's an environmental activist with Keep Lakewood Beautiful and she achieves stellar success in her annual request for food donations to Cleveland Public Theatre's Pandemonium benefit. This year, 33 restaurants and six celebrity chefs are donating their food, their time, and their popularity, all because this sexy, mature blond with the New Yawk accent asked them to.