



West Kootenay Women's Association

May 1991

507 Hall Street, Nelson, BC V1L 1Z1

(604) 352-9916

News from the Centre

Attention all clowns, fools and any and all extroverts of feminist persuasion. We want to get in the Parade - Nelson's Mid-Summer Parade that is. It's a fun way to raise the profile of the Women's Centre in the community but we need some creative and enthusiastic members to make it happen. All the boring old meeting junkies are overcommitted but this is a chance for those of you who say you'll do anything but go to meetings...

Catch 22 - you'll need one meeting to decide what you want to do but after that you can be task orientated. Please call Sam if you are interested and she will put you all in contact with one another. We have to register in the appropriate category by June 14.

Anyone out there interested in Mediawatch? One of our members, Mary Sasges has agreed to read material from them and keep us informed of campaigns, etc. She is the mother of two young children and is interested in hearing from other women concerned over advertising and other media images. Her number is 352-3989.

Sabbian Clover is sitting on the Nelson Perinatal Advisory Committee for the WKWA. Members who have concerns or interest in issues of childbearing or infant care can contact her through Sam at the Centre or at 226-7797.

If there is some issue you would like to coordinate for the Centre we have openings! Just give us a call. Paper management continues to be a thorny problem at the Centre, if anyone out there would be interested in "doing" just one section of the resource files it would be greatly appreciated.

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Women's Centre News continued

The support group for separation and divorce has started and a group for battered women, co-sponsored by the Centre and Nelson Community Services will be starting in May. A group for adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse sponsored by Mental Health and the Hospital will take place at the Day Program at K.L.D.H.

We have also had requests for self defence and assertiveness courses. Any teachers/facilitators interested?

Our funding situation is still up in the air as the Federal Government has not yet decided how much they will be funding us this year so we are unable to finalize our budget. Luckily they did send 25% of last year's funding so we are able to pay the rent (& the coordinator) for now. We have just received half of the \$12,500 grant from Provincial Women's Programs, with the rest to be sent in June.

Regionally we have received grants-in-aid from the Village of Kaslo and rural areas F and G. If you live in one of these areas please express your thanks to council or the regional director. If you live in Salmo, Slocan or areas A, D, E, H, I, or J please encourage your representative to give us a grant-in-aid from their area. Directors need to hear that people from their areas use the resources and services of the Women's Centre.

No Means No - Late News Flash!

Federal Justice Minister Kim Campbell has stated that inquiries will be made into this case from the federal level. Copies of any letters should also be sent to her and to Dawn Black, M.P. to the: House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6. Remember, for the federal M.P.'s, no postage is required.

Women's Minister Carol Gran
Attorney General Russ Fraser
Premier Rita Johnston
The Legislative Buildings
Victoria, B.C. V8V 1X4

Howard Dirks, MLA
108-402 Baker Street
Nelson, B.C.
V1L 4H8

Please write any local newspapers about this issue as well.

No Means No -

- On April 23, 1991, B.C. Supreme Court Judge Sherman Hood dismissed a sexual assault charge against Melvin Earl Letendre.

- Judge Hood ruled that the woman didn't protest enough, that though she said no a number of times, she "did not tell him in unequivocal terms to stop, leave her alone or leave her apartment." Further, Judge Hood ruled that "at times, 'no' may mean maybe, or wait awhile".

- Hood concedes that "there are pieces of evidence...which could be considered as involving some force or intimidation." "But such acts alone, or together... do not demonstrate a degree of force sufficient to establish lack of consent."

- Hood's ruling throws into question just what constitutes "lack of consent". He has set a precedent that it is not sufficient to say no in order to avoid unwanted sex. Whatever is necessary to indicate lack of consent to sex is now totally open to interpretation.

- Hood and other members of judicial system need to know the following;

-the mere fact of inviting someone into one's home does not endow him with absolute rights over one's body.

-men do not have an inalienable right to have sex with whomever, whenever and however they want.

-unwanted sex is always a violation and a crime.

-the ability to use adequate force, either physical or verbal, by a woman or child in a situation of sexual coercion is highly questionable.

The precedent that "no" does not mean "no", is not necessarily unequivocal in and of itself, must be overturned. Please write any or all of the following list of people to express your concern and to urge mandatory education on issues of gender and the rights and needs of victims for all members of the Judiciary. Thank you.

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- Mary Sasges

Provincially and Territorially

The Kootenay Region's year as steering committee is almost completed. At our AGM in May, we officially pass the torch on to next year's steering committee. In preparation for the occasion, Sally Mackenzie and Margaret Shirley from Nelson, Lynn Mace from Fernie and Lorrie MacDonell from Cranbrook held a weekend meeting in Nelson, writing reports and devising workshops, among other things. Sally and Margaret will be attending the AGM, in addition to Sam Simpson who will represent the Nelson & District Women's Centre.

The Vancouver Island region has been reviewing the constitution and will be making recommendations for changes, including a new structure for the organization. In the past, the role of the steering committee has been fairly straight forward, but this year, with all the funding dramas, we have done things differently. Probably, the most effective change was striking a lobbying committee, composed of women from five different regions. Although we have yet to see the recommendations, one of the proposed changes is rumoured to be that we have three co-chairs from three different regions. This will spread the responsibility and help alleviate problems of isolation.

News from the WKWA

Due to illness, the minute taker and report writer of the last WKWA meeting was unable to submit a report to the newsletter. Due to life-related stress and "for gosh sakes that meeting happened three weeks ago", the coordinator cannot remember a thing that happened - other than we are looking for women who might like to be part of the Coordinating Collective for the upcoming year.

The annual general meeting of the Association will be held on Wednesday June 5 at 7 p.m. at the Art Folks' Home in South Slokan. Please make your calendar's and plan to attend. Refreshments will be served and door prizes awarded.

The Association and Centre have hired a new bookkeeper, Laura Walker of South Slokan who will be taking over the books soon. Laura comes into Nelson several times a week and will be working out of the Women's Centre.

New feminists on the block ?

by Jan Nicol

Are today's teenage girls feminists?

Myrna Kostash, guest speaker and author of *No Kidding - Inside the World of Teenage Girls*, asks her audience this question and then offers both troubling and promising answers.

Job streaming, class prejudice, and poor sex education are among the negative influences Kostash examined. In her research, she discovered that girls still avoid science and math courses in large numbers. This means they lose out on opportunities for lucrative jobs. And while more girls enrol in computer courses, she says most girls believe computer skills lead only to unexciting, low-paying jobs.

For the working-class girl, Kostash paints her darkest picture. Schools are detention centres for such girls before entrance into working-class jobs and having babies. Kostash points to a school and social culture that shapes girls' low expectations and low self-esteem. Girls react by creating a subculture, different from the middle-class *norm*. But this subculture of resistance is self-defeating, Kostash suggests, and leads to re-enforcement of these girls' disadvantages.

Adults are still reluctant to teach young people about sex, Kostash also discovered, bringing tough consequences to many

teenage girls. Kostash notes that few girls are emotionally satisfied by sexual activity, and some contract diseases and unwanted pregnancies. The difficulties of being a single mother are not fully comprehended by girls in this situation, she observes.

On the brighter side, Kostash believes that some feminist values have seeped into the behaviors of this generation of girls. Girls take pride in female friendships. Girls take pride in their femininity and look forward to adulthood, a time Kostash states they see as *opening up* not closing down. Most girls view working outside the home as part of the future. And as for relations between the sexes, girls have a new awareness of *fair treatment* by their boyfriends. More girls have boys who are friends too - buddies.

Despite these positive attitudes and behaviors, Kostash says, these girls hesitate to carry on the cause of feminism. They don't want the perceived penalties (loneliness and a world without men and children). Girls want male approval, and they are prepared to accommodate themselves within the male power structure to get it, Kostash proposes.

Although Kostash presents herself as an observer of teenage girls, she does leave the audience with some advice. She encourages the development of supportive, pro-female environments where girls can, for instance, safely express their anger and boys can safely express their support for girls' rights.

Jan Nicol is a substitute teacher in Vancouver.

- from "Teacher" the Newsmagazine of the
B.C. Teachers' Federation, Jan. 1991

Music & Human Rights



The Guatemalan musical group, Kin Lalat is returning to the Kootenays to play a concert on Friday May 10 at St. Paul's Trinity United Church at 8 p.m. This group of 2 women and 3 men have made Nicaragua their home for the past several years. They now hope to be based in Canada for a period of time. Their music, which they play on a large variety of both traditional and modern instruments ranges from indigenous music to contemporary styles.

The musicians will also be taking part in the following day's workshop, "Central America Update". This Kootenay wide annual gathering brings together people in the region for updates on what is happening in Central America and how we in Canada can respond.

A representative from the National Coordination of Widows of Guatemala (CONAVIGUA) will be one of the resource people. CONAVIGUA was formed in 1988 for women who are widows as a result of repression (estimated to number about 40,000) and as a result of sickness, as well as single mothers and all women concerned about bettering women's lives.

Another resource person will be Michael Simpson from Victoria who has produces educational programs about development and the environment. He and his partner, Merran Smith have recently travelled to Guatemala with a Human Rights organization. They are currently in the process of making a video "Burning Rivers" about the links between environmental issues and human rights in Guatemala.

For more information or to register for the workshop call 354-2094 or 365-5077. There is a \$15 fee (including lunch) for the workshop with reduced rates available. Tickets for the concert are \$8 & \$10 and are available at Oliver's and Eddy's Music in Nelson, Pete's TV and Carl's Drugs in Castlegar, and at the Langham in Kaslo.



"Well, I've got to go to work, even if you don't."

Herstory is a Current Event

Mother's Day is May 12 and to celebrate in our own fashion, the Women's Centre will be hosting a brown bag luncheon series from Tuesday May 14 through Friday May 17 from noon until 1 pm. The first three days we will be watching a selection of 10 short films "Working Mothers" designed to promote discussion about the contradictions society creates in lives of women.

These films were produced by Kathleen Shannon in 1973 and as the NFB promotional material says, "(they) are as relevant now as when they were produced" and "an excellent resource to begin an economic analysis of women's work inside and outside the home."

On Friday May 17 we will be showing "Black Mother Black Daughter" a 1989 film about Black women in Nova Scotia and the importance of oral history in their survival. A basket maker, a historian, a community leader, a weaver and a politician discuss their lives.

Please mark your calendars and try to attend one of the days and bring a friend, neighbour or co-worker who has never been to the Women's Centre. Watching a video is pretty non threatening and the time is also limited by the lunch hour! Coffee, tea and juice will be available. All women welcome.

Where Does Our Money Go?

Investing directly in local enterprises as a means of creating sustainable local economies is the focus of a conference in Nelson May 31 and June 1. Sponsored by the Kootenay Centre for a Sustainable Future the conference will have two main resource people: Leslie Kemp and Larry Trunkey.

Leslie Kemp is the Program Coordinator for the Social Planning and Research Council of B.C. and editor of Community Initiatives Newsletter published by SPARC. She's also on the board of the WomenFutures Community Economic Development Society. Larry Trunkey, a founder of the Canadian Network for Ethical Investment, is a member of the Interim Coordinating Council for the Social Investment Organization of Canada.

For more information on this event, phone 354-4445 or 352-7035.

Role Modelling Revived

Last year's role modelling project received a lot of moral support but not adequate financial support and had to be put on hold til the next fiscal year. Well, the time has come to apply for funds, once again. Our committee has been talking with Nelson School District Career Program Coordinator, Gerry Fraser about the project. The school district is implementing an extensive career preparation program so we are currently revising our project to compliment it. For example, we have asked to review their career preparation material to ensure that it is gender equitable. Both the provincial Women's Programs and the Secretary of State are interested in the program and now that funding is available, it is very likely that the project will be underway in the next school year.

Bits & Pieces

CN Scholarships for women - 66 scholarships of \$500 each are awarded to women who are studying to enter a non-traditional "blue-collar" field at selected colleges (Selkirk is not included) in the fall of 1991. Applications must be submitted by August 9, 1991. Brochures with more information are available at the Women's Centre.

Tax on our bleeding - a grass-roots campaign to have the G.S.T. removed on menstrual supplies has started in Ontario. The Centre has got copies of a petition to the federal government that are being collected by June 7 to present before the summer recess. If you are interested in collecting signatures, you can get a petition from the Centre. Signatures are very easy to get and provide an interesting "in" to speak to every woman over 12!

We now have a subscription to the new (no advertising) MS Magazine. There are also newsletters from lots of women's groups, unions and other interesting stuff.

HIV/AIDS Screening Report - an Ontario report on the legal and ethical implications of testing newborn babies for HIV.

The Portrayal of Gender in Canadian Broadcasting - Summary Report 1984-1988. If you've noticed that the portrayal of women in broadcasting hasn't gotten any better, this report will document it for you... The Canadian Radio-television Telecommunications Commission (C.R.T.C.) has extended the deadline for comments on sex role stereotyping in Canadian broadcasting until June 17. You can write to:

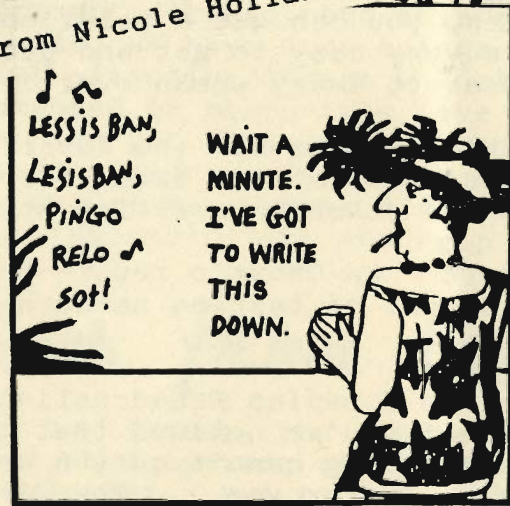
Secretary General
C.R.T.C.
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0N2

with your comments. Emphasize that voluntary compliance with guidelines on gender stereotyping has not worked and press for enforcement of standards by the C.R.T.C.

Job Opportunities - Mediawatch has postings out for two jobs, one in Toronto, one in Vancouver. Applicants must be bilingual. Deadline for applications is May 10. Info at the Centre.



from Nicole Hollander's "That Woman Must Be On Drugs"



WPKWA Events

Coordinating Collective meets on Wed. May 1 and Wed. May 29 at 7 pm at the Centre. The regular June C.C. meeting is being pushed forward a week to accommodate the A.G.M. on June 5. All members welcome.

Separation and Divorce Support Group has started to meet Thursday evenings at the Centre. If you are interested in attending please call Sam to see if the group is still open. Childcare and transportation costs can be covered.

Events Far and Near

MAY 10 & 11

NELSON

Kin-lalat concert by Guatemalan musicians (2 women & 3 men) at 8 pm at St Paul's Trinity United Church on Fri. May 10. Tickets \$8 & \$10. On Saturday, Behind the Music - Central America Update, a West Kootenay conference. Resource people will include a representative from the national Guatemalan Widow's Association CONAVIGUA.

MAY 16

CASTLEGAR

Ms Infinity Conference for girls in grades 9 & 10 that might benefit from encouragement to consider a career in math, science or technology. A few adult observers are welcome. Contact Selkirk College for more info.

MAY 31 & JUNE 1

NELSON

Where Does Our Money Go? Building Healthy Economics Through Local Investment. A conference sponsored by the Kootenay Centre for a Sustainable Future. For more info phone 354-4445 or 352-7035.

JUNE 6

VANCOUVER

Abuse of the Elderly: A Shared Problem. A conference at the Justice Institute, cost \$60. Brochure at Women's Centre.

JUNE 26

NELSON

Kootenay Lake District Hospital Society A.G.M. at the Capitol Theatre, registration at 6:15, meeting at 7 pm (if you don't get registered before the meeting starts, you can't vote). New members must join by May 26.

JULY & AUGUST

NELSON

Summer School at Nelson University Centre is offering a number of courses of interest to women including Women in Literature II with Dr. Margaret Fulton from U.B.C. Info from N.U.C. Box 640, Nelson or phone 352-3144.