

WEST KOOTENAY

WOMEN'S

ASSOCIATION

FEB 2001

Women's Centre Report

by Thea Trussler – Volunteer Coordinator

A belated happy new year to all of our members, staff and volunteers. Looking back at the year 2000 it is truly amazing how far we have come...from the brink of closing our doors to a healthier organization embracing new challenges with energy and enthusiasm. Our volunteer pool is extensive and our coordinating collective is a dynamic and talented crew. Thank you all for your participation in ensuring the longevity of the Women's Centre and WKWA.

The Centre has maintained the high numbers of drop-in users and the statistics have brought to the forefront what the pressing concerns of women in our region are facing. The primary concerns are poverty issues. The basics of food, affordable housing and employment are not adequately available to those in need. To address this issue WKWA is preparing a new project proposal focusing on **economic equality**. The proposal is in the initial stages and it will look at future systemic changes to alleviate these poverty issues. The problem is that needs are here and now. A new committee has been formed to address the concern of food security since the present situation is critical for those in need. It is an inter-agency and community team addressing this issue. Anyone interested in this committee please contact either the Women's Centre at 352-9916 or the Advocacy Centre at 352-5777.

While the Women's Centre is being used more than ever, the time has come that my contract will end February 9th. I was funded as the Volunteer Coordinator for a one year period by the B.C. Gaming Commission. Our fundraising team and the project proposal team are hard at work canvassing for more funds to ensure that services will not be jeopardized but to date we have not received monies to maintain my employment. The dynamic team of thirteen new drop in volunteers will graduate from the training course January 31st and will ensure no disruption of drop in hours. I will continue on in a volunteer capacity but my presence will be limited. Whatever the future holds I will always be involved with WKWA and the friends I have embraced into my heart. Thank you to all for your support, love and laughter through a very difficult growing period of

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WKWA. The ground work has been laid for stability and I trust that new projects have solid ground to flourish. Thank you all for the warmth, support and friendship over the past two years of my involvement here!

Love, light and sisterhood!!!

News from the Admin Coordinator

Maggie Shirley

Spring must be coming soon – a lot of projects are in development around town and in the province. For me, most of January has been divided between attending meetings in Vancouver, writing a grant proposal to Status of Women Canada and collaborating with other groups in the community on a variety of things.

In the meetings in Vancouver, I was part of a provincial reference group, negotiating a continuing agreement with the Ministry of Women's Equality. The meetings went well and if all goes as planned, we should see a contract by the end of March. This would mean that the Ministry of Women's Equality would be contracting with the West Kootenay Women's Association to run the Women's Centre on a continual basis, unless we screw up royally. No more annual applications! The agreement would be reviewed every three years, with the understanding that the contract would go to WKWA.

We have been working with Status of Women Canada to develop a three-year grant proposal. We are asking for money to work on ending women's poverty, especially for women who experience more than one oppression (e.g. women of colour, lesbians, women with HIV/AIDS, etc.). The

project will both help support the women who come to the drop-in and create systemic change in the community.

I've been part of a number meetings for new initiatives, including a committee on food security issues (along with Julie Davies, a new volunteer), the forming of a queer youth group, a project to further improve and increase community-wide collaborative work, and others! Rhonda Schmidt from the Advocacy Centre and I recently invited women from a variety of other organizations to work together to form an on-going events planning committee. This will save having to "reinvent the wheel" every time it rolls

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for submission deadlines.

around to Take Back the Night or Anti-Poverty Day, etc. Our first planned event is for International Women's Day (March 8). We're planning an evening event to celebrate and honour women artists and performers. If you want to help out with the organizing, give me a call. This event compliments an exciting fundraiser planned by two dynamic women. "Luna Chicks" will be a gallery show and sale to celebrate womyn's art in the Kootenays (see more info in this newsletter).

While there are lots of exciting projects on the go, I'm also very aware of how much things will change while Thea will be away. We have an amazing crew of volunteers right now. Sher Knox has been a life saver, coming in every day from 11 - 4. But we'll all miss the energy that Thea brings - she provides a "centre" to the Centre. I'm counting the days til the new grant(s) come in and we're back up to full speed again.

Fundraising Report

Ashala Yardley, Fundraising Committee

A new fundraising committee began meeting in January and we have developed some great plans in store for the upcoming year. Our first event will be a *Mother's Day Show* featuring talents of local mother and child performance teams. We are putting out a **call to performers** for mothers and their children of any age who would be interested in volunteering their diverse talents in this fundraiser for the Women's Centre. Audition times will be posted later in February. Call the Centre for more details. Also, there's talk of reinstating the West Kootenay Woman's Festival this coming summer...and other projects planned include creating a quilt to raffle later in the fall, and a calendar featuring the talent of local female photographers and capturing the essence of Women in the Kootenays to be produced for sale before Christmas. Stay tuned for more information about these exciting upcoming events and projects.

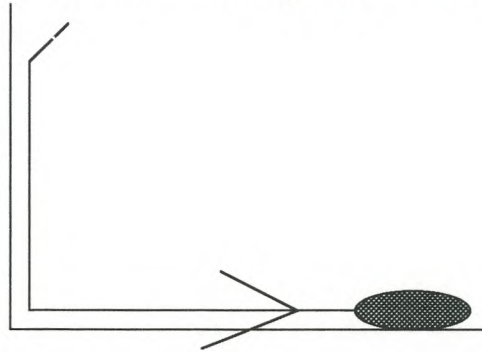


In addition to the proposal for the Status of Women Canada project funding, a couple of volunteers at the centre are working on other grant applications. We are going to submit a letter of proposal to the Columbia Basin Trust, with the hopes of getting complimentary funding for the Economic Equality Project, but as yet nothing is final. If you come across any hot tips about funders, do not hesitate to call! Also, please **RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP!** Registration funds go towards the running of the organization, and currently membership is down. And thank you to those people who have begun new projects to help raise funds for WKWA and the Centre (Luna Chicks and the Vagina Monologues crew), and those community members and organizations who have made donations to us.

Yogamoon - Yoga for Women

By Katya Hayes

Viparita Karani - Legs Up The Wall Pose



1. Begin the pose by sitting on the floor with your left hip and shoulder in contact with a wall.
2. *Slowly* roll onto your back, drawing your legs vertically up the wall. Your body should now be perpendicular to the wall.
3. *Gently* work at edging your sitting bones towards the wall so that your buttocks are in contact with the wall and the legs extend straight up from the hips. *Rest* your heels and legs against the wall.
4. If you find that the hamstrings are straining, simply move your hips away from the wall as far as you need to in order to *release* the strain.
5. Once you have found a comfortable position do a body check making sure that you feel properly aligned, that the spine isn't curved, and that the neck is in line with the rest of your body.
6. Allow the heads of your femurs (the large bones within the upper legs) to *drop gently into your hips*.
7. *Breathing slowly and deeply*, concentrate on the *expansion of the belly* with the in breath, and the *softening of the back and shoulders* with the out breath. *Release. Relax. Renew*
8. Stay as long as is comfortable, coming out by reversing the previous actions.

Benefits: This is one of my favorite restorative poses. It is excellent after a long day on your feet, whether that be at work, or after a long hike. It is both a preventative and a curative measure for varicose veins, a common ailment for women in all stages of life. It allows the veins in the legs to "take a vacation" from the hard work gravity puts on them. It flushes the reproductive organs with fresh nutrients and feeds the lower spine. Apart from all the wonderful benefits it feels absolutely fantastic- try it, you'll be hooked!

Contraindications:

This pose is generally safe for everyone if you follow the modifications given-

High blood pressure- If you have high blood pressure take the buttocks about two feet away from the wall so that the legs are not at a 90 degree angle, but a 45 degree angle. Do not stay longer than 5 minutes.

Pregnancy- I highly recommend this pose for pregnant women (and I am 7 months pregnant myself so this is tried and tested!) because of the tendency to get fluid build up in the lower joints whilst pregnant. Some women also develop varicose veins during their pregnancy. Viparita Karani also allows your legs a break from carrying all that precious cargo up top! I do recommend taking the buttocks away from the wall just as described for people with high blood pressure. Another way to do it is to place the lower legs on a padded chair with the knees bent at 90 degrees.

Shared Parenting

Brenda Woolner, B. A., B. S. W.

Shared parenting is an arrangement where both divorced parents share as equal partners in the raising of their children. Each has the responsibility for the parenting tasks of guiding, disciplining, supporting and caring for the children. Shared parenting does not determine physical residence, but allows parents to creatively plan the residential arrangements that will best provide for the children. An unworkable marriage does not mean that parenting together after divorce will be unsuccessful.

Children make the best adjustment to the changes caused by divorce when they have an ongoing relationship with both parents. Shared parenting can be a way of setting the stage for the parents to work together cooperatively for the best interests of the children. Since parents often have different skills and assets, shared parenting allows parents to combine their childrearing skills and more completely meet the needs of their children. A working relationship has its ups and downs, its good times and bad times, but for the average parent given time and effort it usually works. *It is not wise to consider shared parenting as an option when there has been a history of violence or abuse in the relationship.*

A workable shared parenting plan means that both parents and the children are relatively happy and comfortable with the routine

that has established. Problems still occur but parents are mutually responsible for the problems and arriving at the solutions.

A workable shared parenting arrangement most often includes the following components:

- * the arrangement is good for the children
- * the arrangement is workable for both of the parents but does not serve their needs over the needs of the children
- * the arrangement is consistent
- * the arrangement provides ongoing contact with each parent
- * the arrangement shares financial responsibility for the children
- * the arrangement contains a clear set of procedures
- * the arrangement allows for the involvement of the extended family.

If you would like help in designing or revising a parenting plan that will meet the needs of all members of your family, please call me at Life-force Services 354-2010 and we can discuss your personal situation.



Library Report

Allison Hack

As we approach mid-winter in the West Kootenays many of us will turn to the comfort of a warm cup of tea and a good book. We have some wonderful new additions to our library collection. Some new titles are: *Telling It: Women and Language Across Cultures*, a collection of essays on a variety of topics including women's experiences with feminism and racism across cultures; *Song of Lilith*, a poem by Joy Kogawa; *Sisters of Grass*, a novel by BC author Theresa Kishkan that touches on the themes of nature, the past, and women's lives; *Pool Hopping*, a collection of short stories by Anne Fleming; *Asha's Mums*, a children's book by Rosamund Elwin and Michele Paulese that approaches some issues surrounding lesbian parenthood; *This Place Called Absence* a first novel by Vancouver writer Lydia Kwa that weaves the narratives of past and contemporary women; *Close To Spider Man*, a collection of stories by Ivan E. Coyote that paints a portrait of what it's like to a young queer woman in the Yukon; and *The Women's Retreat Book*, which is a "Guide to Restoring, Rediscovering, and Reawakening Your True Self in a Moment, an Hour, a Day, or a Weekend" by Jennifer Loudon.

Although we have some great new additions we've also had many unfortunate losses. Over the last three years, at least 45 books have completely disappeared from our library's collection. Many more are seriously overdue. The library operates on an honour-based system. We hope that women will honour themselves, each other, and the collection itself by signing books out and returning them within a reasonable period of time. So, dust off those book covers and return those over due books weighing on your conscience. A late return is better than no return! There's a 24 hour drop-box on the back door of the Women's Centre.

Black, First Nations and Women of Colour Health Anthology

There are many Black Women, First Nations Women and Women of Color suffering from physical, mental, emotional and spiritual illnesses every day. Many reasons contribute to this; one of the objectives of this anthology is to bring to light some of these reasons and give solutions as to how women can improve their overall health care. The anthology is to draw on personal experiences: women writing about the ways that they have dealt and are dealing with various illnesses in their lives. Also, professionals within the health care system can share their expertise and help bring to light some of the problems and solutions relating to Black Women/ First Nations Women/Women of Color and health. Each woman is different, each community is different and we all have many, many different experiences and health issues. We cannot look at all health issues within each community and with every woman. However, the anthology can open a dialogue that is extremely important to the well being of a huge population of women. The editor graduated from the Women Studies programme at York University. At present she is a full-time employee at the university who plans to continue her studies, hopefully in Women's History. Her first anthology is "Our Words, Our Revolution: di/verse voices of Black Women, First Nations Women and Women of Color In Canada", published by Iannah Publications (operating under Canadian Women Studies Journal) at York University has just been released. Editor: Sophie Harding, 61 Markbrook Lane #702, Toronto, Ontario M9V 5E7, Canada; (416)

746-5802; <SHarding@yorku.ca>.

The Vagina Monologues

Susie O'Donnell

Whether you know about them or not, women in Nelson will get a chance to hear these powerful stories, written by Eve Ensler after asking hundreds of women what they thought about their vaginas. Out of the overwhelming response to the Vagina Monologues came V-Day, February 14th, a movement with the mission to raise public awareness of and put an end to violence against women. Performances of the Vagina Monologues are taking place all around the world around this date to raise funds to support organizations working to ensure the safety of women everywhere.

The West Kootenay Women's Association is presenting The Vagina Monologues as a fundraising event. Performances are scheduled for April 19-21, during Prevention of Violence against Women Week, as well as April 26-28 the following week. Funds raised from the benefit will be used to support programs which promote awareness of and support initiatives to stop violence against women. Women who are interested in auditioning for The Vagina Monologues should call Joanna Maratta at 352-1898. Audition times and dates TBA. Rehearsals will take place during March/April.



Anyone interested in a general peer support group or a day long Tantric workshop, call the Centre to let us know. 352-9916

Thank you, Thea!

The staff, Coordinating Collective and other volunteers of the West Kootenay Women's Association would like to say thank you to Thea for her work and dedication to the organization, especially during a particularly vulnerable time for us. The Centre has survived and is thriving and will for many years to come.

Consumer Alert: Nonoxynol-9

This report was taken from a Consumer Alert faxed to WKWA from the desk of P. R.W. Kendall, British Columbia's Provincial Health Officer.

We are writing to alert you to the results of a recent study conducted by UNAIDS in Africa which found that nonoxynol-9 (N-9), a product widely used in spermicides, was not only ineffective in preventing HIV infection in the trial subjects, but may have increased the women's chances of becoming HIV positive.

Over a period of four years (1996-2000) UNAIDS sponsored a randomized controlled double-blind research study to examine the effectiveness of N-9 in preventing the transmission of HIV. The study revealed that the women (HIV negative sex trade workers) who used the N-9 spermicide gel had become infected with HIV at approximately a 50% higher rate than women who used a placebo gel. In addition, the more frequently women used only the N-9 gel (without a condom) to protect themselves, the higher their risk for contracting the HIV virus. Simply stated, in this high risk group, N-9 gel did not protect against HIV infection and may have facilitated the transmission of the HIV virus, as N-9 can cause genital irritation and inflammation of mucous membranes leading to an increased likelihood of HIV infection.

The Ministry of Health and Ministry Responsible for Seniors and the British Columbia Centre for Disease Control have never recommended N-9 for HIV prevention or for preventative transmission of STDs, but do recommend the consistent and correct use of latex condoms to reduce the risk of unwanted pregnancy and to decrease the transmission of sexually transmitted diseases and the HIV virus which causes AIDS.

In our view this new information should be made available to sexually active women and we recommend that they be informed that

1. The benefits of any N-9 lubricated condom probably outweigh the risk of using no condom at all. However, the best STD and HIV barrier is a latex condom without N-9.
2. Condoms lubricated with N-9 should not be used for anal intercourse.
3. Those using condoms lubricated with N-9 for vaginal intercourse should be provided with information regarding potential for irritation of the vaginal and cervical mucosa (tissues) which in turn increases the risk of HIV infection.
4. The risks and benefits of using N-9 as a method of preventing pregnancy should be evaluated for individual patients.

Products that have been licensed for sale in Canada that contain N-9 spermicide:

- *Trojan Ribbed Condom with N-9 spermicide lubricant, manufactured by Carter-Horner Inc.
- *Gynol II Contraceptive Jelly with N-9, manufactured by Johnson and Johnson
- *Lifestyles Spermicidally Lubricated Condom with N-9, manufactured by Ansell Canada Inc.
- *Hardcover Ultra Condom with Spermicide N-9, manufactured by Hardcover Products Inc.
- *Advantage 24 (Vaginal Contraceptive Gel) manufactured by Roberts Pharmaceutical Canada
- *Delfen Foam (Spermicide Creme), manufactured by ORTHO

Please pass this information on to others!

Ms. ELLANEOUS

Since the soup kitchen was closed on December 22, 2000, hungry people have been helped by the United Church food cupboard. Their food supply is now dangerously low and shelves are rapidly becoming empty. If you can help them with non-perishable food items, please drop them off at the Nelson United Church, 602 Silica St. Monday-Friday, 9 am - 12 noon, or the Advocacy Centre, 501 Front St., Monday-Thursday, 9 am- 5 pm (closed noon - 1 pm for lunch). Thank you for your support.

A tranquil home is wanted for an artistic sensitive soul. \$300-\$350 range. Call 352-1169.

Due to more than a comfortable number of strange stories and ghost-like visitors to the Nelson and District Women's Centre, **the CC has decided to change the locks of the Centre**. This change has now occurred, so if you have a key and would still like access to the Centre, you need to speak to Maggie Shirley.

As part of the new fundraising events plan, the Fundraising Committee is putting out a **call for submissions to all Kootenay (women) photographers**. We are going to put together a 2002 calendar, and are asking for black and white photographs (preferably 8x10 enlargements) that would fit into the theme of "Women of the Kootenays." Deadline for submissions is July 31 2001. Call the Centre (352-9916) or Michelle at 352-5888 for more details.

Outward Bound Wilderness Course for Women. Informative Slide Show, March 1st 2001. Outward Bound courses are challenging, exhilarating journeys that take place in Canada's most beautiful wilderness: the majestic peaks of BC's Coast Mountains. Outward Bound is a non profit educational organization which inspires to promote personal growth through shared wilderness adventure. Since 1969 over 50,000 people have taken part in an Outward Bound experience in Canada. The wilderness will be your classroom, and the mountains provide the challenges. With encouragement and support you explore perceived limitations, and work to enhance your capabilities. It is an experience of empowerment which leaves a lasting impression on each participant. **Outward Bound offers courses for women survivors of violence (Women of Courage), and for single moms (Women Ascending).** The Women of Courage (WOC) program doesn't focus on the abuse, but on the healing process. Women Ascending (WA) gives moms a chance to focus on their own growth. These courses are free to anyone who qualifies. Outward Bound seeks support from corporate foundations and individual donors to cover all expenses, from child care to transport. If you are interested in learning more about OB, and what Women of Courage or Women Ascending involve feel free to come to an informative slide show on Thursday March 1 at 7:00 at the Nelson & District Women's Center, hosted by Judith Robertson.



Special Ms. style supplement!
by Alison Bechdel

a fond look at the fab, funky world of u.s. FEMINIST FASHION

WHO SAYS IT'S AN OXYMORON? FEMINISTS HAVE BEEN FORGING NEW FRONTIERS OF FUNCTIONAL FLAIR EVER SINCE AMELIA BLOOMER TORCHED HER HOOPSKIRTS! LET'S EXAMINE SOME OF THE MORE MEMORABLE LOOKS OF RECENT YEARS.



THE ENERGETICS OF HEALING, The work of Caroline Myss

By Rose Stapenhurst

The Women's Centre is offering a new group for women. This eight week program will focus on the work provided by Caroline Myss in her videos on The Energetics of Healing. Each week we will examine one of Caroline videos and open up discussion as how these concepts apply to our own lives. The aim of the program is in sharing and supporting each other in our own healing and growth.

"Beyond the threshold of your physical anatomy lies another type of anatomy – invisible to the eye, yet critical to your health. Composed of pure energy, this vast network not only determines how your body functions and heals, but also serves as a connection to divine power and all of life" Caroline Myss

The workshop series starts Tuesday February 6th and runs from 4-6pm for eight weeks. The fee is on a sliding scale between \$16 - \$40 for the full eight weeks and is payable on the first afternoon. All proceeds will go directly to the Nelson and District Women's Centre. The group will be limited to 12 participants on a first come first served basis. The group will be closed after the second afternoon. This program will be run out of the Women's Centre at 420 Mill Street.

Facilitators: **Rose Stapenhurst** is a Human Service Counselor and has trained at Findhorn, in northern Scotland, as a Course and Workshop Leader and Circle Dance facilitator. **Julie Kucera**, MSW received her master's degree in social work from Eastern Washington University, Washington. She is trained as a mediator and conflict resolution specialist with experience in group facilitation and counseling.

Are you getting enough to eat? Come for lunch on February 19 and we'll talk about what you need to get good food when you need it. Monday February 19, noon til 3:00 at the Nelson United Church. Lunch will be served. If you need childcare, call 352-5777 by February 16 to reserve a place for your child(ren).

Women Celebrating Women!

Through song, dance, literature, performance and art

A show case of women's talent to honour and celebrate International Women's Day

Thursday, March 8, 2001

7:00 - 10:p.m.

802 Baker Street (Old Scandinavian Church)

All ages/genders welcome

WKWA AND OTHER EVENTS

February 16 there will be a meeting at the Women's Centre to discuss creating a group for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered youth. From 4-6pm. Adult supporters welcome, too.

Call for submissions for Luna Chicks, a celebration of Womyn's Art in the Kootenays! We want your art for a HUGE gallery show and sale to raise money for the Women's Centre. So come on all you Wild Womyn, submit your poetry, photography, paintings, sculptures, textiles, jewellery, performance art, ceramics, etc. to the Women's Centre, 420 Mill St. Nelson, between the times of 12 noon to 4pm Tuesday to Friday. 5\$ submission fee for 5 pieces of art (max). **Deadline is February 16, so hurry!** Call Justine at 229-4141 or Lindsay at 399-4834 with any questions.

February 19 there will be a **community meeting on food security issues** from 12 noon to 3pm. Everyone is invited, especially people in poverty. Lunch included. Childcare available (call 352-5777 before Feb. 16). Organized by a variety of community groups, including NDWC.

Beginning **Monday February 19**, there will be a **group meeting for men who are seeking to change their abusive behaviour directed at their wives/partners**. This confidential 16 session group will take place on Monday and Wednesday evenings from 6:30pm-9:00pm. To register, please call Nelson Community Services at 352-3504 by Wednesday, Feb.7.

An 8 week workshop on **The Energetics of Healing** begins Tuesday, **February 20 from 4 - 6 p.m.** at the Women's Centre. Facilitated by Rose Stapenhurst and Julie Kucera. Cost for the workshop is \$16 - \$40. All proceeds go directly to the Centre. Call Julie at 354-4201 to register.

On **March 1** at 7:00 p.m., **Outward Bound** will host a **slide show** on their programs for women at the Women's Centre. See Ms. Ellaneous for details.

A Support Group for women who have experienced or are experiencing relationship abuse starts in early March at Nelson Community Services. Call 352-3504 for information.

March 8 is International Women's Day. There will be a Women Celebrating Women Evening through song, dance, literature and performance at the Old Scandinavian Church on 802 Baker St., 7pm. Organized by Community Women's Events Planning Committee, including NDWC.

Check out **Luna Chicks** gallery show from **March 5 - 9** at Sunfire Energies, Taghum

March 28 there will be a **Preventative Breast Health Care Workshop** with Dr. Josee Lesperance at the Nelson Municipal Library Meeting Room, 7-9pm. Part of the Centre's health series.

April 4 there will be a **Lesbian Health Care Issues Workshop** with Jacqueline Luce (Health Care Researcher) from 7-9pm at the Women's Centre. Part of the Centre's health series.

Every Thursday from 1-3pm there is a **Free Mothers'Group**. This drop-in provides you with the opportunity to meet and talk with other parents, to share your experience and to learn more about all aspects of life with a new baby. The group alternates between a discussion and presentation format. At Nelson & District Home Support Services. Phone 352-2911