



Have a Wonderful Winter Celebration!



Women's News

WEST KOOTENAY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

December 2001



**The Women's Centre
Will be closed from
December 22, 2001 to
January 1, 2002**

**Happy Holidays Everyone!
See you in 2002**



West Kootenay Women's Association News

Published by Nelson & District Women's Centre

420 Mill St. Nelson, B.C. V1L 4R9

Tel: (250) 352-9916 Fax: (250) 352-7100

email: wkwomyn@netidea.com

Editorial Collective/Contributors: Thea Trussler, Cheryl Dowden, Jai Sequoia, Penny Ruvinsky

Graphics/Layout: Jai Sequoia, Penny Ruvinsky

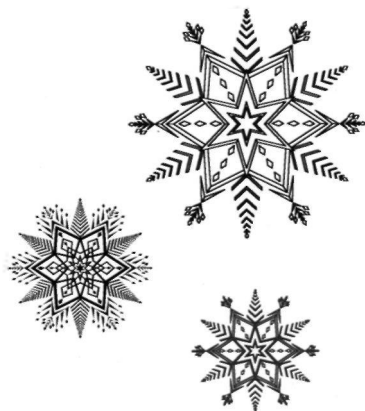
Oops!! Thanks to K. Linda Kivi for contributing to the October newsletter.

We need your help, contributions, events, art, and "Letters to the Editor"!!

WKWA News is published 7 times per year. Call us for submission deadlines.

Operational funding provided by the Ministry of Community, Aboriginal, and Women's Services, Province of British Columbia. Funding for Volunteer Coordination provided by BC Gaming Commission.

Funding for the Anti-Poverty Project provided by Status of Women Canada.



Administrative Report - by Cheryl Dowden

On Oct 23rd, I represented the Nelson & District Women's Centre at the Association of BC Women Centres meeting with the Honourable Lynn Stevens, minister of women's equality (MCAW), in Victoria. The purpose of the meeting was to fight for the preservation of women centre's funding in the face of potential cutbacks from the Liberal Govt. Staff from 27 out of a total of 35 BC women centres, representing tens of thousands of women who access Women Centre's services across the province, attended the meeting. The day before our meeting with Lynn Stevens in Victoria was spent planning a well-organized presentation. The presentation included a list of demands and questions directed at the minister who had given BC Women's Centres a written commitment in her letter of July 11, 2001, "to work to improve the lives of all women, to enable them to reach their greatest potential, and (to) be free from discrimination, violence, harassment and poverty". Clearly, any cuts to women centre's funding will undermine this commitment from the minister and will in fact, ensure, just the opposite.

"We represent tens of thousands of women in BC and we're not going away."



Originally, Lynn Stevens had agreed to meet with us in Vancouver and later said that she was only able to meet with us for one hour in Victoria on the 23rd. This meant that women centres or the individuals attending the meeting would have to bear the cost of transportation to Victoria for that brief one-hour meeting. Fortunately, the BC Federation of Labour stepped in and offered to pay our transportation to Victoria if we would attend their rally scheduled for the same evening. The BC Feds also offered us a meeting room in Vancouver, as well as lunch on the

22nd. Without their support the meeting with Lynn Stevens would not have been economically feasible.

The list of demands that we presented to Lynn Stevens, on Oct 23rd, included some of the following:

1. Preserve and guarantee (at a minimum) the current level of Women's Centre funding. Preserve and guarantee (at a minimum) the current level of funding to other women-serving organizations, such as Transition Houses and Sexual Assault Centres, to name a few.
2. Immediately restore a free-standing Ministry of Women's Equality.
3. As the Minister of Women's Equality, guarantee that other governmental Ministries will include a gender impact analysis in all legislative policies.
4. Arrange a government funded meeting with the Honourable George Abbot, Minister of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services, and the Women's Centres of British Columbia prior to the completion of the Core Review Process.

In my opinion, the most positive thing that occurred from the 2 days of meetings on the Coast is that there is a strong coalition of Women Centre's that has formed to take on whatever we need to face from the Liberal government. In our concluding statement to Lynn Stevens, we asked that, as our representative we expected her to deliver this message to Gordon Campbell:

"We represent tens of thousands of women in BC and we're not going away. We see clearly that where he is taking us will roll the clock back 25 years for women in BC. And we're not going back. And our children are not going back, and our children's children are not going back."

Unfortunately, Lynn Stevens did not give us any clear indication that Women Centre's Funding will be preserved, only that the Liberal Government is still currently going through the core review process and that no decisions have been made. Neither did she affirm any personal commitment towards



(Continued from previous page)

advocating for us on the behalf of women in this province. We are still waiting to hear back from her about whether we will be able to have a meeting with the Hon. Mr. Abbott which she stated that she will try and organize, but will be dependent on his schedule.

This week, a "leaked document" to Global TV, a budget submission by the Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services Ministry, showed a huge cut in spending over the next three years. The internal document suggests a cut of \$147 M or 35% over the next 3 years. This most surely will impact women's centres in the province.

The BC Women's Centre Coalition is presently preparing a response to the "leaked document" calling for an Open and Accountable Government and reminding the BC

Liberal government of their promise to carry on the core funding of Women's Centres and to preserve the Ministry of Women's Equality as a free-standing ministry. The Coalition will not accept any broken promises that will result in a loss of essential services for women in this province.

This is a time for our organization to strategize about possible other funding sources in order to deal with the real possibility of funding cuts. We have faced difficult times before and we have a rich herstory of the kind of change that comes with a strong united feminist voice during times of struggle. The important thing to remember is that we are not alone and that the Nelson and District Women's Centre is part of a strong coalition of women's voices across the province that will not be silenced by Gord Campbell's economic war on women, children and the poor!



SPEAK



YOUR TRUTH!

Volunteer Coordinator Report - by Thea Trussler

T'is the season to be busy falalala lalala. The centre is bustling with energy and enthusiasm for upcoming events in December. The newsletter contains details of the December 6 Memorial event and the **December 7 Singing for Our Sisters** fundraiser by the Selkirk College music students. The students are working feverishly on a theme song for our centre and creativity is the word of the day!

We would like to invite women to attend a Solstice gathering at the centre during the day, December 21. Details are to be finalized by the new wonderful crew of volunteers. Please call closer to the date for details.


This year's volunteer training course is at maximum capacity. Twenty women have signed up for the ten week course and many new ideas and projects have been initiated by this wonderful group of women - an outdoors group will meet to go skiing, hiking, and camping and an alternative contraception info group is just starting up. For more information call the centre.

Happy holidays to all and remember what is truly important at this time of the year...being with family, friends and community. Cheers!

Thea Trussler
Volunteer Coordinator



Special Events



December 3, 2001

Advisory Committee meeting for the Anti-Poverty Project. 10:00-11:30AM, at the Women's Centre. If you're interested in becoming a part of the committee, please call Penny at 352-3177.

December 6, 2001

In remembrance of the 14 women murdered in 1989 in Montreal, women are encouraged to come to the Women's Centre to create notes on the theme of violence against women. These notes will be incorporated into a larger sculpture that evening. The notes can contain names of women they know who have been killed in violence, or prayers for women facing current violence in their lives.

In the evening, 5PM, the community is invited to attend a memorial beside the clubhouse (between the two soccer fields) at Lakeside Park. A brass plaque set into a rock and a commemorative tree has been placed to remember the fourteen women. Women are invited to bring offerings for an altar and additions to the sculpture. There will be music by the Images Adhoc Singers and the Selkirk College music students. The committee for the White Ribbon Campaign will be serving hot beverages. For more info call Thea at 352-9916.



December 7, 2001

SINGING FOR OUR SISTERS, 7PM, at Studio 80, the Selkirk College music students are hosting a wonderful fundraiser for the Women's Centre. Five ensembles will present jazz, world music, rock, funk and original songwriters. The Women's Centre theme song, written by the students, will be premiered at this event. Following the Day of Remembrance on December 6, this seems a wonderfully appropriate and healing way to celebrate our future. Tickets are priced on a sliding scale, \$5-15 & up, and are available at the centre or can be purchased at the door. Seating is limited so buy early. 100% of the proceeds go to the women's centre!!! For more info call Thea at 352-9916.

Regular Events

Nelson Food Coalition: Meets 1PM, the 2nd Wednesday of every month at the Nelson United Church, 602 Silica St., back door. This group is working to create a Food Centre that will provide food security in a respectful, consistent manner, and will be a place to hold community kitchens, workshops, and dinners. Meetings are open to everyone.

Nelson United Church Food Cupboard: Open Monday to Friday, 9AM to noon for drop-off & pickup—602 Silica, back door. The Food Cupboard is helping to provide food security for many community members while the Food Centre is being planned. Please help if you can by donating non-perishable good food items.



a fundraiser for the
Nelson & District Women's Centre

Featuring 5 Ensembles from the
Selkirk College Music Department

World Music 🎵 **Blues** 🎸 **Rock** 🎵
Funk 🎵 **Song Writers** 🎵

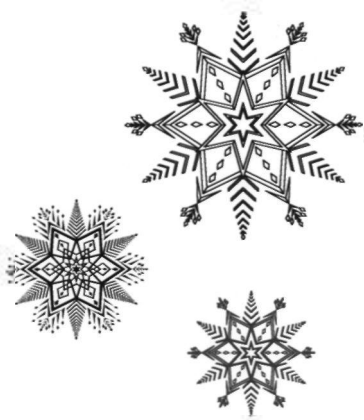
DATE & TIME: December 7th, 2001 7:00 pm

LOCATION: Studio 80 (10th St. Campus at Selkirk College)

TICKETS: Sliding Scale \$5 - \$15 (& up!)

Available at the Women's Centre 420 Mill Street or at the door

Graphic Design by Jai Sequoia



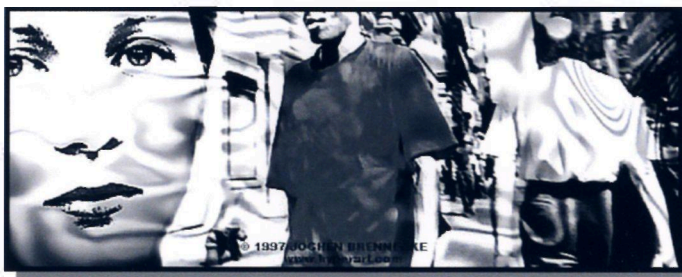
Anti-Poverty Project Coordinator Report by Penny Ruwinsky

*DID YOU KNOW?

- ☉ 15% of children and 20% of women lived in poverty in BC in 1998.
- ☉ 30% more Canadian women than men lived in poverty in 1998.
- ☉ The LICO (Low Income Cut-Off) for rural communities and communities with less than 30,000 people, for a family of four, is \$23,039 - \$26,472/annually.
- ☉ The poverty rate in BC was 14.6% in 1998
(I'll post 2000 figures when they come out)

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- ☉ Buy locally
- ☉ Demand labels for fair practices
- ☉ Use only your share and give the rest away
- ☉ Understand and encourage fair welfare and EI strategies
- ☉ Support socialized health care
- ☉ Work with anti-poverty groups in your community fight for social justice
- ☉ Demand pay equity in your work place
- ☉ Pay attention to what federal, provincial, and municipal governments are doing with your money
- ☉ Demand accountability and adequate funds for social programs



Undernourished children are more susceptible to illness, have diminished attention spans, and are unable to perform tasks at school as well as their nourished peers.

**National Council of Welfare Reports Child Poverty Profile 1998*

THE COST OF EATING IN BC

The challenge of healthy eating, October 2001

The following is an excerpt from the Executive Summary of the COST OF EATING IN BC - The challenge of healthy eating, October 2001, a report by the Dieticians of Canada.

Dieticians in British Columbia are concerned about the ability of those on low incomes to purchase a healthy diet. In June 2001, community nutritionists surveyed grocery stores throughout BC to determine the cost of a healthy diet. It costs 5% more to eat in BC than it did one year ago yet Social Assistance rates have not changed. The monthly cost to feed a reference family of four increased by almost \$30 a month to a total of \$626. Housing costs continue to consume a major portion of the low-income earner's wage and the social assistance shelter allowance falls far below the average cost of rental housing.



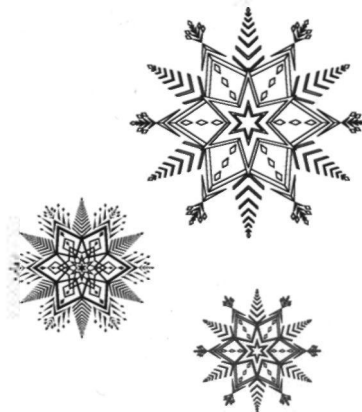
Data from Statistics Canada's National Population Health survey, 1998/99, indicates that 10% of Canadians were living in food-insecure households. Low-income households, households depending on social assistance, lone-parent families headed by women, tenants, children, and Aboriginal people had significantly high odds of experiencing food insecurity. Food insecurity was significantly associated with poor/fair health, multiple, chronic health conditions, obesity, distress and depression. Undernourished children are more susceptible to illness, have diminished attention spans, and are unable to perform tasks at school as well as their nourished peers.

The partners in this report - Community Nutritionists Council of BC and Dieticians of Canada, BC Region - with support of two provincial agencies - Social Planning and Research Council of BC and the Canadian

The Cost of Eating in BC (Continued from previous page)

Association of Food Banks, BC Branch - make the following recommendations to the government and citizens of BC.

1. The BC Ministry of Human Resources should index the support allowance to the cost of a nutritious food basket based on the age of children and the shelter allowance should be set at the average rental housing costs.
2. The BC Ministry of Children and Family Development should make School Meal Programs available in more schools throughout the province to meet current or urgent needs.
3. BC Ministries, regional health authorities and municipal governments must work together to help alleviate food insecurity in BC.
4. All British Columbians should support food security actions initiated in their community and become more informed about food insecurity and its impact on the community.



Working Group on Women's Health Issues - by Cheryl Dowden

The Women's Voices for Health - A Community Action Forum, sponsored by the Nelson and District Health Council and the Nelson & District Women's Centre, was held on October 13th at LV Rogers. More than 70 people attended. Cheryl Dowden (Admin. Coordinator, Women's Centre) was a member of the planning committee and a facilitator for the action forum that focused on a variety of health issues of importance to women in this region.

Lynn Whynot, VP Programs, BC Women's Health, was the keynote speaker. She spoke about "Health Care Reform As if Women Mattered". Strategy and Action workshops on a variety of issues such as mid-life women, seniors, birth & parenting, rural women, young women and special issues were a part of the day's events. The follow up to this event is the forming of a special Working Group on Women's Health Issues. Some of the possibilities for this working Group include a look at the feasibility of the Community Co-op Health Model for rural communities in this area and developing a directory of alternative Practitioners in the region. If you are interested in being a part of this group, please contact **Cheryl at (250) 352-3177**.



"If only it were all so simple! If only there were evil people somewhere insidiously committing evil deeds, and it were necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them. But the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being. And who is willing to destroy a piece of his own heart?" *Alexander Solzhenitsyn, After Surviving a Siberian Prison Camp*

December 6 - National Day of Remembrance & Action on Violence Against Women



On December 6, 1989, the following 14 women were killed by a man with a semi-automatic weapon at L'Ecole Polytechnique in Montreal.

Genevieve Bergeron, 21, reached for the best in people, making everyone around her feel good. She was a second-year scholarship student in civil engineering.

Helene Colgan, 23, a woman of artistic and political passion, who would have fought hard to change the world. She was a fourth-year student in mechanical engineering and planned to take her master's degree.

Nathalie Croteau, 23, had a wit and an irresistible sense of humour which made everyone around her see the brighter side of life. She was in her final year of mechanical engineering.

Barbara Daigneault, 22, worked as a teaching assistant for her dad at L'Ecole de Technologie Superieure. She was a fourth-year mechanical engineering student.

Anne-Marie Edward, 21, was nicknamed "Spunky". She was into white-water kayaking, rock-climbing, downhill skiing, and horseback riding. She was fluent in 4 languages and was a first-year student in chemical engineering.

Maud Haviernick, 29, drew people close to her with her gaiety, spontaneity, and warmth. She was a second-year student in engineering materials and a graduate in environmental design. Maud was giving a presentation with Michele Richard when the gunman walked into the class.

Barbara Klueznik Widajewicz, 31, was studying nursing. She had come from Poland with her husband in 1987. They planned to practice medicine in a remote area of Canada.

Maryse Laganier, 25, worked in the budget department of l' Ecole Polytechnique. Her husband describes her as "gentleness and patience incarnate".

Maryse Leclair, 23, was in her final year of mechanical engineering. She was a few days away from her degree and had set her mind on becoming an astronaut. She has three sisters.

Anne-Marie Lemay, 27, had blue, laughing eyes and overwhelmed people with her enthusiasm and generosity. She was in her final year of mechanical engineering.

Sonia Pelletier, 28, was filled with tenderness and laughter and is described by her younger sister as a precious black diamond. She was to graduate the next day in mechanical engineering. Her degree was awarded posthumously.

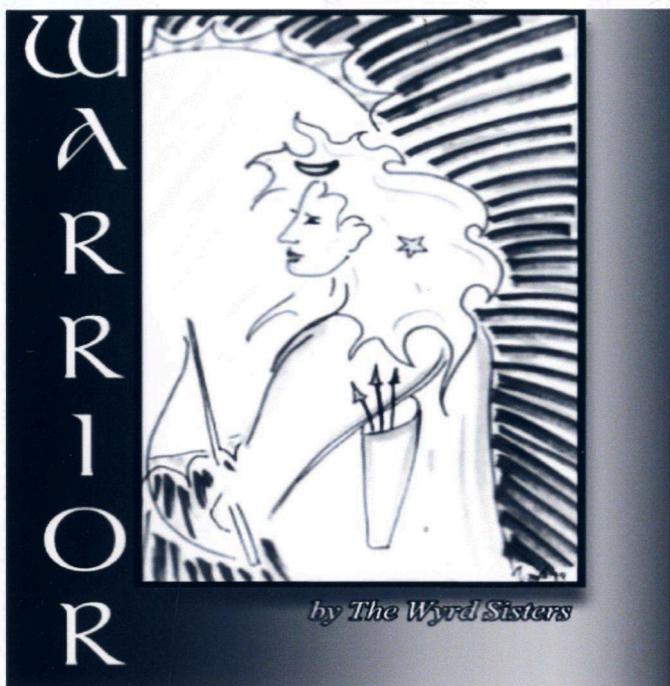


Michele Richard, 21, played the flute, trumpet, piano and organ and was engaged to be married. A second-year student in engineering materials, she was presenting a paper with Maud Haviernick when she was killed.

Annie St-Arneault, 23, played the flute, worked with a theatre troupe, and was part of the 4H club. She was strong willed, bright and studious and was a second-year mechanical engineering student.

Annie Turcotte, 21, honest and direct, expressed her well-reflected opinions passionately and philosophically. She was a first-year student in engineering materials.

Since then, thousands of other women have been victims of murder. The violence must stop. To effect change: learn non-violent ways to think and speak about ourselves and others; educate ourselves and the groups we belong to, about violence against women; speak out against comments and "jokes" that degrade women; take an active stand against businesses that sell pornography or use offensive advertising; reach out to abused women in a supportive and non judgemental way; support organization working against violence such as Transition Houses and Women's Centres.



*I was a shy and lonely girl
 With the heavens in my eyes
 And as I walked along the lane
 I heard the echoes of her cries*

*I cannot fight
 I cannot a warrior be
 It's not my nature nor my teaching
 It is the womanhood in me*

*I was a lost and angry youth
 There were no tears in my eyes
 I was no justice in my world
 Only the echoes of her cries*

*I cannot fight
 I cannot a warrior be
 It's not my nature nor my teaching
 It is the womanhood in me*

*I am an older woman now
 And I will head my own cries
 And I will a fierce warrior be
 Till not another woman dies*



*I can & will fight
 I can & will a warrior be
 It is my nature and my duty
 It is the womanhood in me*

*I can and will fight
 I can and will a warrior be
 It is my nature and my duty
 It is the sisterhood in me.*

