

The West Kootenay Women's Association Presents:

IMAGES Kootenay Women's Paper – A Primer on Feminism
Collected and Edited by Dr. Marcia Braundy
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Throughout the 1970s and into the early 1990's, IMAGES, Kootenay Women's Paper provided a media for both militant analysis and social commentary on the laws of the land. It provided an examination and celebration of Kootenay women's lives and culture, in active solidarity with women all over the world.

We documented the women's movement in Canada as it was practiced in the lives of women in the East and West Kootenays, telling both personal and political stories, stories of the struggles for effective and satisfying economic, social and political lives for women in rural Canada, while linking arms and words with women from around the world, telling their stories along with our own. Theme issues addressed the major challenges of our times, Aging, Health, Machinery, Sexuality, Reproductive Rights, Working, Lesbian life, Mothers and Daughters, The Arts, Media, Feminism, Violence Against Women, Travel and Relationships.

Many of the same struggles are facing young and older women today. There is much to be learned for men and women from the reflections, discussions and analysis found in these papers.

Herstory

IMAGES Kootenay Women's Paper, as it came to be known, was originally published in 1972 as the Nelson Women's Centre Newsletter. Sadly, we do not have the originals of the earliest work. Very shortly, it became the voice of the Kootenay Women's Council, a coalition of women's groups from Trail/Fruitvale, Rossland, Castlegar, Nelson, The Slokan Valley and New Denver, produced first at the Nelson Women's Centre, and then at the West Kootenay Women's Council's Selkirk College office. During this time, it received its name, IMAGES, and became a newspaper. Many local women artists produced the artwork for the covers. Ultimately, publication moved back to Nelson, where it remained until energy faded in 1991.

IMAGES was produced by volunteers and operated without government funding for most of the 19 years of its existence. Lesbians and straight women worked together very richly and successfully throughout its existence, somewhat unique in the annals of the women's movement.

Marcia Braundy was the original editor, and continued in that role through the decision to move from a Gestetnered 8 ½" x 14" format to 11" x 17" newsprint, and on to mid-1975, when she became ill, and asked Moe Lyons to take over the paper. Moe put out the excellent Abortion issue in September 1975, where she made a clear call to women to join her in collectively producing the paper. Marcia joined the Collective at that time, and the first collectively produced paper came out in February 1976.

While Collective members changed over the years, with women coming and going and coming again to the work, some names appear regularly for long lengths of time: Bonnie Baker, Marcia Braundy, Rita Moir, Camille Bush, Joy Green, Wendy Hurst, Tish Lakes, Donna Macdonald, Sally Mackenzie, Lois Path, Sam Simpson, Vita Storey, Marg Tessman. These women were joined by close to 200 contributors over the years of the newspaper's existence. Some women used noms de plume, and with their permission, I now expose their true names. Lois Path was the nom de plume of Norma Kilpatrick. Bonnie Evans found that when she signed only her first name, and put her place of residence underneath, she started getting fan mail addressed to Bonnie Winlaw, and so the name stuck! Vita remarried and had another child, and is now Luthmers. Editorial policies changed regularly, particularly regarding signed and unsigned articles (the responsibility of the Collective), whether to use only first names or whole names or changed names or noms de plume.

Many IMAGES Collective members and contributors went on to become prize-winning published authors, artists, community activists, leaders and politicians and you can Google names like Rita Moir, Luanne Armstrong, Caroline Woodward, Sandra Hartline, Marcia Braundy, Tish Lakes and Donna Macdonald, Moe Lyons, Leni Normington, and Fran Wallace to follow up on their careers. Others were incredibly stalwart typesetters: Bubbles Hodgson, Maureen Mitchell, Jane Lewis and others.

Deep appreciation will always go to Ann Swanson Gross, who created wonderful cover illustrations for several issues, and illustrated a tremendous number of articles throughout many years of IMAGES existence.

Women like Susan Charlton provided important connections to the rest of Canada during the early years, through contributions related to their membership on The Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, and British Columbia's Human Rights organizations. Kootenay women were represented in the founding of the British Columbia Federation of Women, and the Coalition of BC Women's Centres. We can follow Marcia Braundy's construction carpentry career from the 1970's Vallican Whole work through becoming the first woman to graduate in a Trades program at Northern Lights College or complete a Carpentry Apprenticeship at BCIT (then PVI), right up to the conference that named her National Coordinator for a fledgling national Women in Trades and Technology organization. Lynn Lidstone (local to the Slocan Valley at the time), and Gert Beadle, (a wise crone from Thunder Bay published in IMAGES in 1975, and later moved to Kelowna and supported the Women's Centre there, where an award is named in her honour), these women were poets extraordinaire, providing us in rhythm and rhyme with a clear analysis of the challenges faced by millions of women including the struggle of finding our paths.

Dedication and Thanks:

This CD is dedicated to those women and all the others who have worked so hard on IMAGES to bring this strong, vital, thoughtful, reflective, political/social/cultural

commentary to you, from women living their principles in rural Canada: A Primer on Feminism.

Thanks go to the men and women small business owners in the West Kootenays who supported us with their advertising over the many years: some of these include Bob Lerch at Organic Mechanix, the late Richard Meisenheimer at Airy Mountain Motors, Michael Jessen at the Preservation House Restaurant, Buddy DeVito at DeVito's Shoe Repair in Trail, and his son Vince, when he opened in Nelson; Audrey Rothcop at The Pantry House, Jesse at The Jam Factory Restaurant, Packrat Annie's, Wayne Peppard at Smoky Creek Plumbing & Heating, Donna and Larry Evans at the Bird House Hobbies and Crafts, the late Jamie Hart at the Merchants of Venice, the lovely couple at Frame Art, Suma Kay at Lomi Bodywork and oh so many others. These community members were forthright in their financial support in bringing IMAGES to the public heart.

Thanks go to the West Kootenay Women's Association for sponsoring this project, the BC 150 Heritage Legacy Fund, Canadian Heritage for funding, The Touchstone Museum of Art and History for providing the Launch venue, Chris Hives and Leslie Field at UBC Archives for support, technical assistance, and Shawn Lamb of the Museum's Shawn Lamb Archives and Ron Wellwood, Retired, Librarian at Notre Dame University, Selkirk College, and David Thompson University where he had the foresight to subscribe to IMAGES and could fill in the blanks in the IMAGES collections of Bonnie Baker and Marcia Braundy.

Deep appreciation to the volunteers who worked on this project. We are delighted that they ranged in age from 17-65. They are, in no particular order: Vita Luthmers (Storey), Paige Kutzner, Sandra Hartline, Linda Crossfield, Jessa Koerber, Kate Guthrie and Sam Stevenson for scanning, naming collective members and contributors and Optical Character Recognition work, Judy Deon and Shawn Lamb for archival sorting, Barbara Brown of Raven Creations for artwork, Bonnie Nilsen www.blndesign.com for web work and Jai Sequoia www.sequoiadesign.ca for stitching centrefolds and Photoshop advice.

It was a project of greater magnitude and complexity than any of us could have imagined, and we are pleased to be able to present it to you.

With regard,

Dr. Marcia Braundy
IMAGES Archival Project Manager and worker
West Kootenay Women's Association