

West Kootenay Women's Association

OCTOBER 1991

507 Hall Street, Nelson, BC V1L 1Z1

(604) 352-9916

News from the Centre

I am pleased to be able to report that we once again have a Women's Centre Committee to act as a steering committee for the Centre and a sounding board for my problems and ideas. Hopefully this will both reduce the details that the Coordinating Collective needs to deal with as well as giving me more direct support. Thanks to the new committee members, Bekah Kane, Deborah Schwartz, Gwynneth Powell and Joanne McRobb. We have room for more members so give me a call if you would like to join us. We have had morning meetings but are flexible and will meet at the time most convenient to the majority.

A small but book-loving group also has just met to renew work on the library. Their first priority will be to get the new books on the shelf and then carry on with finishing the cataloguing on the computer as well as some reorganization of shelves, book repairs etc. If you have any time to donate to the library your help would be appreciated.

I'm very happy to report that some fall programming is underway with some more things on the drawing board. "Catching Our Breath", a smoking cessation group facilitated by Deborah Schwartz, (formerly with the Women's Health Clinic, Winnipeg, now in the Kootenays) will be starting in October. The support group for women in abusive relationships that we are co-sponsoring with Nelson Community Services will be starting Oct. 22 and running for 8 weeks on Tuesday nights.

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Women's Centre Report - continued

A weekend course in Wenlido, a financial planning presentation, a showing of "Burning Times" and "The Goddess Remembered" and an afternoon and evening social for newcomers to the community and the Centre are also planned. Please see "Upcoming Events" for details.

As well we hope to begin a number of other groups in the not too distant future. These might include a general support group that would not be facilitated and one or more groups for survivors of childhood sexual abuse. Sally is planning to do a Handywomen's series fairly soon. There also seems to be some need for a lesbian drop-in or ? If you are interested in any of these (either as a participant or worker), or know women who may be, please let me know asap.

Those of you who have keys to the Centre, please be conscious that a group might be meeting and that the Centre may not be available for photocopying, etc. We'll get a sign that can be posted while groups are in session.



WKWA Report

This report will attempt to be as concise as possible, as it covers a great deal of time, since before the Festival (remember the Festival?)

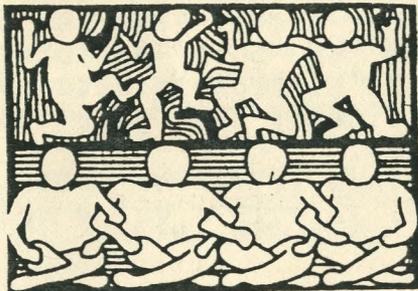
- We now have the names of the two young women from WE Graham who received our awards for top female students. They are: Robyn Palmason for Math/Science, and Jo Ann Barclay for Shop. Congratulations! And we'd love to know what you are doing over the next ten years....
- The WKWA has agreed to give its support to the Uranium-Mining-Free Canada Campaign.
- Sam Simpson made a presentation on behalf of the WKWA and the Women's Centre to the Gender Bias in the Legal System public hearings. These hearings were held September 13 and 14 under the auspices of the Law Society. Presentations were also made by other WKWA members, (not on behalf of the Association, however) notably Bonnie Baker and Carol Beauchamp (Ross).
- The Role Modelling project for schools is moving along at the snail's pace we have come to expect, due to bureaucratic lethargy (or is that normalcy). There is some good news - we are getting money from both levels of government and we will have office space in City Hall at some nominal rent. *We desperately need interested women to be on its steering committee*, so if you have a little time and lots of interest in seeing a full range of career options available for young women, please feel free to volunteer. *We will be hiring for this project soon*, so anyone who wants to work with this project for money should be alert to catch the job ad when it comes out. The time line for this project now looks like Oct. 1991 to Feb. 1992, or so.

Now that abortion is considered a medical matter in Canada as opposed to a criminal matter, Roussel-Uclaf and Roussed Canada must be impressed with the fact that there is no legal deterrent to the use of such an abortifacient in Canada. They must allow the distribution of the drug in Canada for testing. It is inhumane to deprive woman of a more acceptable response to contraceptive failure. Decisions by the drug companies and the drug regulatory authorities should be made on scientific assessments and not on moralistic judgements that disregard the autonomy of women.

Finally, the World Health Organization must be supported in its continuing research to find an application for RU 486 in the Developing Nations, thereby alleviating the estimated 200,000 deaths annually caused by botched and unsafe abortions.

If you are interested in supporting the WHO in this cause and/or would like to see RU 486 distributed in Canada, the Women's Centre has a list of names and addresses to whom you address your concerns.

from Canadian Abortion Rights Action League



*the
Goddess
is Pro
Choice*

B.C. HOTLINE FOR VICTIMS OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT
BY PHYSICIANS

1-800-661-9701

The College of Physicians and Surgeons of B.C. has formed a committee (including lawyers, an ethicist and community representative) to examine issues of sexual misconduct by physicians with their patients. The public can use the confidential toll-free line to make anonymous and unofficial complaints and receive support or obtain advice. Callers can also obtain instruction on how to file a formal complaint.

Aids and Women

The World Health Organization estimates that of the approximately 1.3 million cases of aids to date, one third have been in women. By 1992, WHO analysis indicates, a cumulative total of 600,000 women will probably have developed AIDS. In addition, WHO estimates that AIDS will kill at least 2 million women during the 1990's, most of them in sub-Saharan Africa.

As of 1990, 60% of HIV infections worldwide have resulted from heterosexual intercourse. By the year 2000, it is projected that 75-80% of all HIV infections will result from sexual intercourse between men and women, which will mean dramatic increases in HIV infection among women.

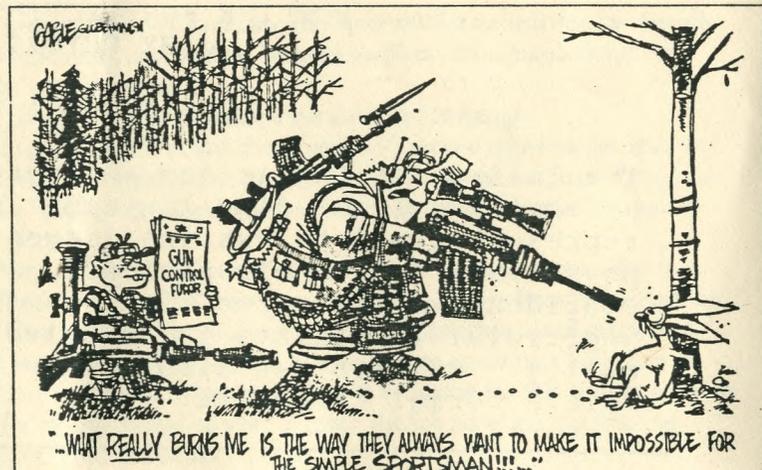
An estimated 1 in 40 women in sub-Saharan Africa is already infected with HIV. Elsewhere, for example, 1 in 500 women in Latin America and 1 in 700 women in North America is infected.

WHO estimates that approximately 30% of infants born to infected mothers will become infected with HIV before, during, or shortly after birth. The 70% not infected will likely lose one or both parents. A cumulative total of as many as 10 million infants will be born infected with HIV worldwide by the year 2000, with a further 10 million orphaned.

from The Update (newsletter of AIDS
Vancouver Island, July 1991, Vol 4 No. 6)

"Society's most arbitrary folly is the underutilization of a woman's brain power." Laura Sabia.

The Globe and Mail, February 9th 1991



WKWA Report

- The WKWA and the Women's Centre have agreed to co-sponsor part of the travel and attendance fees for Bekah Kane and Midge Maloney to go to Toronto for a major conference on sexual abuse, called **No More Secrets**. This conference is taking place the first week in October. Bekah and Midge will be attending two day-long workshops on ritual abuse, and will be bringing information back to our community in two workshops, one for counsellors and one for laypersons. There have been requests here for workshops/support groups on ritual abuse, but at this time, although there has been a ritual abuse workshop here, no one feels competent to facilitate these groups. Bekah and Midge are also doing work around using WorldSign as a healing tool for sexual abuse survivors, and are currently calling this work *Healing Through Gesture*. They will be exploring the further development of this work with women in the anti-violence movement in Toronto.
- The Women's Centre now has a copy of the video, "One Hit Leads to Another." This video was put together by Victoria's Women's Centre Transition House (where your report-writer had her first & only paid job in the women's movement!), and is distributed by the Provincial Women's Program.
- The Women's Centre is buying a subscription to *A Friend in Need*, the highly acclaimed magazine about menopause.
- The Women's Festival made somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$4000 (a little less). This money is the WKWA's very own to do anything we want, without having to watch our mouths or be afraid of having someone take it away. Thank you, women, and I hope you had as good a time as I did! At the Festival Evaluation meeting, we discussed the forms that were turned in and the various ways in which the Festival could be improved. Next year's Festival will take place the second weekend in August, as has previously been the tradition, so everyone can now plan their next summer with these dates in mind. By the way, we still have a few (very few!) lovely turquoise Festival T-shirts for sale at the Women's Centre.
- A Women's Centre Committee has been formed!!! See the Women's Centre Report for details.
- We have hired Sylvia Smith as facilitator for a **Battered Women's Support Group**. Call the Centre for details.
- We are looking into applying for some provincial government money for work around family violence.
- We spent \$264.86 on new books for the Women's Centre Library because we had them for the Festival from the Vancouver Women's Bookstore and we couldn't bear to part with some of them.
- We will be hiring Marie Wells to give a **Consensus Workshop** to members of the CC and the Women's Centre committee.
- We will be organizing a **Financial Planning for Women workshop**, given by Jennifer Bell Rose. The Nelson Library has had her in to do a workshop once before, and felt that having her come again was a worthwhile undertaking.
- Last year's showing, organized by Sue Anderson and Friends, having been such a great success, we will once more be arranging to show **Goddess Remembered** and **Burning Times** in celebration of Samhain (otherwise known as Hallowe'en). More details forthcoming or elsewhere.
- The WKWA and the Women's Centre will be sponsoring **Catching our Breath**, a smoking cessation group for women, the week of October 21st. The facilitator will be a new arrival in our midst, Deborah Schwarz (sp?). Deborah helped put together a highly-recommended book/package of the same name, as well as having been active in *Herizons*, a feminist publication that used to come out of Winnipeg. We are delighted to have her here in our community.
- Saturday, October 19 we will be sponsoring a woman speaker from Central America. More details elsewhere.
- On October 1, members of the WKWA went to the PSAC picket line in front of the Federal Building to show our support for the workers. We presented a prepared statement, with particular emphasis on the struggle for pay equity. We also stressed that it is the intransigence of the government employer that is inconveniencing the public, not the employees, who are striking not only for a better pay package but for job security and against the constant erosion of government services. Thank you to Gwynneth for making the support signs.



RU 486

In 1980 research at Roussel-Uclaf in France by Dr. Etienne-Emile Baulieu culminated in the creation of an "anti-hormone". Roussel-Uclaf reported two years later that the drug, named RU 486, had induced early abortion in nine out of eleven women in its initial trials.

RU 486 is a "progesterone antagonist" - a chemical which blocks the usual hormonal effects of progesterone necessary to maintain a pregnancy. Taken within seven weeks of the last menstrual period in conjunction with a prostaglandin, an agent which induces uterine contractions, it is 95% effective in causing the shedding of the embryo. Its hormone-blocking abilities also make it a potentially valuable medical drug as a treatment for breast and other cancers, endometriosis, glaucoma and Cushing's syndrome. Furthermore, long term risks from RU 486 are unlikely as the drug metabolizes quickly. Other strong advantages of the drug are that it requires no anaesthetic, is not surgically invasive and permits privacy for the woman. This is particularly important in small centres where anti-abortion harassment may be strong.

Trials of RU 486, under tight security from Roussel, have taken place in several countries, including the USA. In a 1984 study conducted in Sweden via the World Health Organization (WHO), the efficacy of the combination of RU 486 and prostaglandin was examined, proving its effectiveness rate.

Beginning in 1987, outcries by those opposing abortion of any kind in the USA produced an attempt to block research on RU 486. Boycotts of all Roussel-Uclaf products and those of its German parent, Hoechst Co., were threatened by Catholic hospitals and anti-abortion organizations, primarily in the US. In October 1988, the distribution of the drug was suspended in France. Following a storm of international protest, the French Minister of Health ordered the drug back on the market, calling it "the moral property of women". Although the drug is widely used in France through authorized clinics for approximately one-third of the abortions performed there, Roussel-Uclaf later decided to suspend distribution outside of France. This included the UK, Sweden and the Netherlands where its approval was imminent.

Events Far and Near

OCTOBER 8-11

VICTORIA

Congress '91 In Search Of What is Right. A congress on criminal justice sponsored by the Canadian and BC Criminal Justice Associations.

OCTOBER 25-26

EDMONTON

Women and Constitutional Reform: Numerous topics. Contact Centre for Constitutional Studies, 456 Law Centre, U. of A., Edomonton, Alberta T6G 2H5 or call (403) 492-5681.

OCTOBER 26

BONNER, IDAHO

Fall Forum...For women in the process of ...learning, growing and sharing. Pamphlet at Centre, billeting available.

OCTOBER 28-NOV.3

EVERYWHERE!!

Eating Disorder Awareness Week. Information available at the Centre.

OCTOBER 30

VANCOUVER

Vancouver Women's Network/Westcoast Women's Network Reunion: Where are you now-twelve years later? Contact Ethel Jones at 222-5272.

NOVEMBER 8-10

EDMONTON

Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women Conference with the theme: Global Vision/Local Action, for more information (403) 492-8950 or pamphlet at Centre.

NOVEMBER 18-19

VANCOUVER

Justice Institute - Treatment of sexually abused and sexually reactive children. For further information: 222-7251 or 222-7111 or see pamphlet at Centre.

Gossip & Message Board

Dianne Luchtan will be travelling to Mexico in November to the Guatemalan refugee camps as part of a group who are working with the refugees to assist them with preparations to return home. Any contributions to assist her travel cost can be sent to: Nelson Central America Support Committee (make cheques out to them), c/o 715 Hendrix, Nelson, B. C. V1L 2B1. Please let them know if you would like a receipt for income tax purposes.

The Women At Risk Committee who will be providing the social supports for a young Vietnamese woman and her infant to come to Nelson are looking for suitable shared accommodation for her. If you have space in your Nelson home and would be interested in finding out more, please contact Sam at the Centre.

The Winlaw Volunteer Fire Department is presently recruiting members and would like to continue to have firefighters of both genders in their group - so if you live in the Winlaw area and have Tuesday evenings available please contact them for further information.

Role Modelling Update

The Role Modelling project which has been on the drawing board for these many years is about to roll. The hiring committee is two thirds in place (anyone out there want a very short term committee job) and we will have ads out to hire staff shortly.

If encouraging young women to consider and become interested in a wide range of career opportunities is a matter of concern to you, please volunteer to be part of the steering committee for this project. Because there has been such a long time since the conception of this project, the women who have been involved are now very busy with other commitments so we need a few of you to come forward. As the project is slated to go for 18 weeks, it would be a short term commitment.

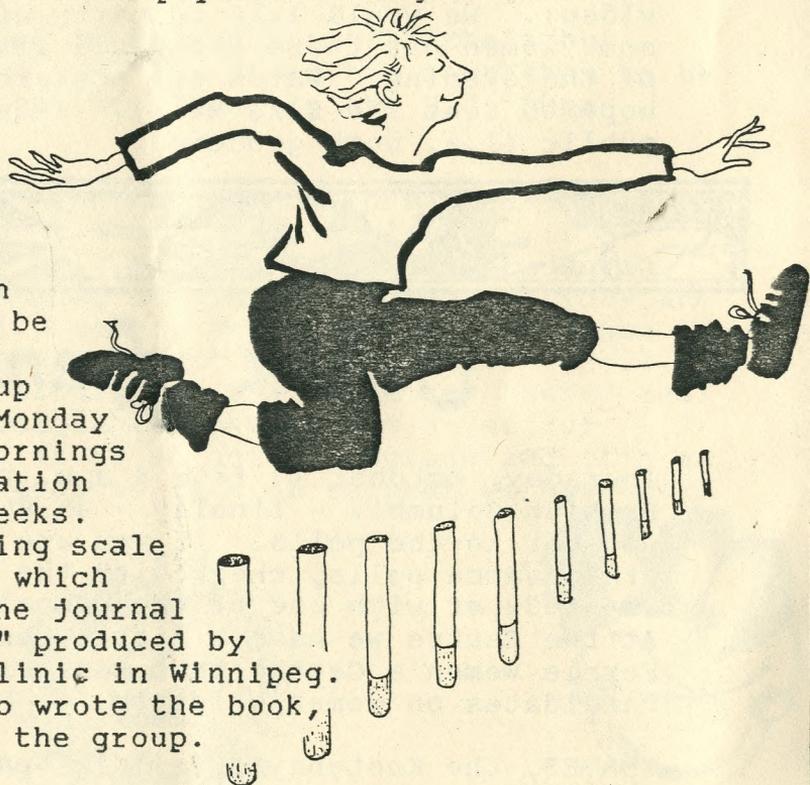
WKWA Events

WKWA Coordinating Collective meets the first Wednesday of each month at 7 p.m. at the Centre. All Association members welcome.

A woman from Nicaragua and another from Angola will be visiting the Nelson area in mid-October. The Centre will be hosting a get-together with them on the afternoon of Saturday, October 19 from 2 to 4 p.m. Please call Sam at the Centre or Dianne Luchtan for more information.

WEN-LIDO on October 19 & 20 (Sat. & Sun.) - a 14 hour self-defence course for girls and women (seniors welcome) in Nelson. Taught by Gitta Ridder who has many years experience teaching this program. If there are enough interested women an ongoing group is possible. Sliding scale fees of \$30 to \$50. Registration in advance by Oct. 15 with 1/2 of the fees payable at registration.

Catching Our Breath
- a smoking cessation group for women will be starting the week of October 20. The group will either meet on Monday evenings or Friday mornings depending on registration and will run for 8 weeks. There will be a sliding scale charge of \$35 to \$55 which includes a copy of the journal "Catching Our Breath" produced by the Women's Health Clinic in Winnipeg. Deborah Schwartz, who wrote the book, will be facilitating the group.



WxWxWx Events - cont.

A support group for women in abusive relationships, facilitated by Sylvia Smith, will be starting on Tuesday October 22 and running for 8 weeks. It will meet at the Centre and monies are available for transportation and childcare costs for the participants.

Wednesday October 23 from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m. the Centre will be having a Newcomers Tea Party for women who are either new to the area or new to the Centre. We will be soliciting goodies for this event or you could volunteer...

Financial Planning for Women evening is a definite maybe for sometime this fall. Please give the Centre a call if you would be interested in attending. There would be no charge.

"Goddess Remembered" and "The Burning Times" will be shown on Friday November 1 in Nelson on screen (i.e. not video). We would like to party afterwards if there are some women out there who would like to organize that part of the evening. Watch for posters for time and place (we hope to rent the Elks Hall). This will be open to the public (i.e. both genders)

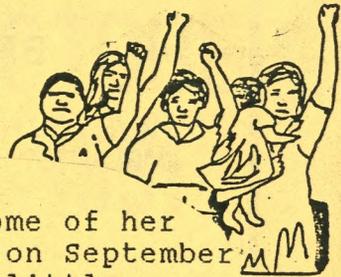


Other Events

Thursday, October 17 from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. throughout British Columbia - finally - an ELECTION DAY! Make sure you get to the polls. If you are going to be away, there are advance polls, check with the Returning Officer at 354-1032 or with one of the campaign offices for details. At the Centre we have a little pamphlet put out by the Fernie Women's Centre that has pertinent questions to ask candidates on women's issues.

IMAGES, the Kootenay's feminist paper, meets each Thursday at 7 p.m. Call 352-2379 for location and info. New women are always welcome.

A Woman of Action!



Local hero Sandy Korman from Creston and some of her friends did a little direct action in Yahk on September 7. Having stopped at the Yahk Hotel for a little refreshment, Sandy was overcome in a manner only too familiar to us, by the signs on the wall. They had messages such as "A woman, a dog and a walnut tree, the more you beat them the better they'll be" and "What's the difference between a smart woman and a UFO? I seen a UFO once."

Korman decided she wasn't going to leave without the signs being taken down, so she removed several of them (climbing on a table to get one that was a little too high) and took them with her. She left her card (unpaid commercial ad - she's a wonderful potter) with the hotel employee so the hotel owner could contact her.

The hotel owners tried to charge her with theft but charges are not being laid as Korman has sent them to be used as evidence in her complaint to the B.C. Human Rights Commission.

In an article in the Creston Advance Korman said "You see it is not a joke and it didn't make us laugh - it offended us and hurt us. It is not a joke because in real life women are being beaten and abused everyday and that hurts all of us - women, men and kids. Violence is never funny and I think we must try to end it. Small steps like removing literature that promotes hatred and makes violence an acceptable joke is not an act of aggression or theft, it is an act of courage and it's an attempt to end the needless lack of respect we have for one another."



BREAST IMPLANT INFORMATION

HAVE YOU HAD BREAST IMPLANTS OR ARE YOU CONSIDERING BREAST IMPLANTS?

CONTACT

I KNOW/JE SAIS

Joy Langan, MP
Room 640-C
House of Commons
Ottawa K1A 0A6
(613) 996-2756
(604) 467-0694

Marcella Tardif
503 - 12024 Boul. Lachapelle
Montreal, Quebec
H4J 2M4
(514) 956-1262

Linda Wilson
8316 - 118th St.
Delta, B.C.
V4C 6H2
(604) 596-4600

I KNOW/JE SAIS is an information network of women who have had breast implants who are collecting and sharing information with other women. We assure you of the strictest confidence. **Please contact us for more information.**

More Events

OCTOBER 18

NELSON

Kootenay School of Writing presents Dennis Denisoff, author of "Dog Years" a just-published first novel dealing with the subject of AIDS in Canada and the USSR. Denisoff is a native of Glade who studied at DTUC and is presently doing a doctorate at Concordia. At the SUB at 8 p.m.

NOVEMBER 30

CALGARY

Protecting Infant Health; Re-enforcing a Breastfeeding Culture. An excellent-looking conference with good resource people - Sam is hoping to attend, so if others are interested contact her for more info and carpooling.


This newsletter is produced by members of the West Kootenay Women's Association. We welcome submissions by the 20th (or so) of each month. Submissions can be sent to 507 Hall Street, Nelson B.C. Thanks to everyone who helped write and produce this issue: Moe Lyons, Lynne Anderson, Mary Sasges, Sam Simpson and Joanne McRobb.