

WEST KOOTENAY
WOMEN'S
 ASSOCIATION

AUGUST 2000



Women's Centre News!

Who said that the summer was the slow time for the Women's Centre? We have certainly had an exciting and busy time since mid July to the extent that our statistics are averaging a 50% increase for women using the drop in. Most of the women coming into the Centre are first timers and many have become members!

A new and exciting addition to the Centre's drop in hours is the Free Store! We were receiving so many donations at the back door that it had become too overwhelming to include the amount of clothing in a garage sale. A member (I truly wish I could remember who planted the idea) suggested that we have a free store. We decided to utilize the upstairs front room as the Free Store. The concept is simple... if you have clothing you can drop it off, if you need clothing you can pick it up at the store! It has been widely advertised through a poster campaign and greeted with enthusiasm!

I am so delighted to welcome Maggie Shirley as administrative coordinator. She brings with her a multitude of talents and her warmth and humour helps on those stressful moments! We can now focus on forward momentum with the energies of both of us here at the Women's Centre.

The Women's Centre is now seeking new volunteers to assist in all areas of WKWA's needs. The autumn is traditionally a time for transition. Many new women arrive in Nelson and the need for women who are familiar with the facilities in town is essential. Please contact me if you have two hours a week to volunteer for your organization. We are scheduling a training session in late September that will give you a certification of completion. This certificate will be recognized on your resume and will enhance your own personal growth.

Thank you to all who continue to support us. We are stronger than ever and excited by the possibilities of the future. Strength in sisterhood, strength in family and strength in our community!
Thea Trussler, Volunteer Coordinator

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Women on a Soapbox

by the coordinating collective

As the CC reflects over the past year we are filled with a sense of accomplishment and renewed faith in the WKWA. The past year has been challenging but also very rewarding. The new collective took over last September faced with a precarious financial situation and low morale amongst the membership. Creativity sprung from chaos and the Collective worked with the membership to conduct an internal review, launch a very successful fundraising drive, recruit many new volunteers and bring a new vigor to the organization.

The dedication of the returning CC members combined with the new energy and ideas brought by the new CC members allowed the CC to bring the organization through one of its tougher challenges over the years. The strength of the CC this year was based upon the mutual appreciation and acceptance of all of our members, new and returning, and our ability to honour the intentions and dedication of each woman who graciously volunteered her time, energy and commitment to the Association.

This past year has been a great example of how the strength of our organization lies not only in the experience of those women who have been involved for many years but also in the fresh energy and ideas brought by our new members.

If you have been involved with the West Kootenay Women's Association in the past and are no longer active in the organization, please come back, your experience is invaluable.

If you are new to the area, or if you have never been involved with the WKWA, please join us. Become a member, sit on a committee or join the collective. However you decide to be involved, your ideas and energy can make a difference.

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for submission deadlines.



I'M BACK!!

by Maggie Shirley

Yes! I'm back at the Centre and happy to be here. For those of you who don't know me, I have been involved with the Centre and Association previously in 1985 and again from 1990 to 1996, as a project coordinator, researcher, cc member, office manager and volunteer. So I'm hoping that all that history plus a renewed sense of energy and optimism about the Association will prove useful in my new job. I've been impressed with Thea and the CC's ability to ride the waves over the last year. It's been a great pleasure to work with them. Yes, there are still many funds to be raised and Thea's position is only funded until February, but we've been here before and come through.

One of my first priorities was to expand the Policy and Procedures manual. The manual will help provide continuity when we have future staffing changes. So, if you're interested in policy review and working on a Code of Ethics, do I have the committee for you! As well, it's AGM time again. Come on out September 23. We're looking for members for the Coordinating Collective and other committees, so please consider joining.

There has been a lot of health information coming in lately so we are passing it on to you in this issue of the newsletter. And speaking of health, marching is an excellent form of physical and political exercise! And there are so-o-o many opportunities this fall. We'd love each and everyone of you to come to Take Back the Night (September 19) and the World March 2000 to eliminate poverty and violence against women (October 17). In addition, you can also join Kootenay Gay Pride (September 2), the AIDS walk (September 24) or the regional World March in Christina Lake (September 9). See ya on the streets!

Employment Equity Report

By Ruth Beck

The employment equity project is active on several fronts at present. I (the project coordinator) am putting together a basic "tool kit" for local employers on fair human resource practices. The first item in the kit is an Outreach Recruitment Directory that list the names and contact information for organizations providing employment services to equity groups in the West Kootenays. Employers are encouraged to send job notices to the organizations on the list. Of course, WKWA and Kootenay WITT are included, as are groups working with First Nations, visible minorities, youth and people with disabilities. The list is based on a directory from the BC Public Service Employee Relations Commission.

I have found some interesting information available on the web. The BC Human Rights Commission has an Employers Guide to Human Rights. It lists everything from employee and employer rights to guidelines for interview questions. As of August 24, they will have another document available that describes how to develop a sexual harassment policy and practices. FYI, their web site is www.bchrc.gov.bc.ca.

On another front, I am working on a media plan to highlight employment equity success stories. Right now things are at the planning stage but I hop to get some articles in the media this fall and winter. FYI, there are some media workshops in Trail on October 4 and 5 for people who work in non-profit organizations. If you want more information, leave a note for me at the Women's Centre.

Finally, Maggie Shirley and I are going to review the Ministry of Women's Equality Discussion Paper on Economic Security and Pay Equity. The Ministry welcomes comments by women but the deadline is August 25. We'll keep you posted.

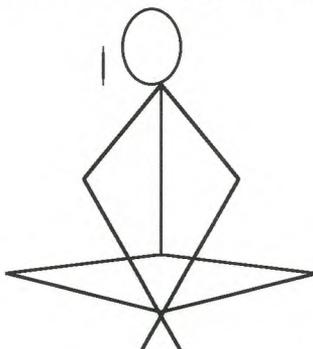


Yogamoon - Yoga for Women

By Katya Hayes

Yoga is an ancient philosophy based on a process of self-awareness, body opening/consciousness, and the connection with spirit/essence (among many other things). Through movement, breath, and awareness we have the opportunity to explore many of the wonderful mysteries that the body has to offer. In this article I will be focusing on yoga poses that are especially beneficial for women, whether it be in our journeys through pregnancy, menstruation, menopause, or just the joys of life in general. Please keep in mind to be gentle with yourself, and that all of our bodies are wonderfully different from one another, so if any of the poses feel uncomfortable or painful either ease off, find a more suitable position, or refrain from doing the pose. Most importantly, be playful, inventive, and compassionate.

Baddha Konasana - Bound Angle Pose / Butterfly Pose



1. Sit on the floor with the legs outstretched in front of you.
2. Bending the knees, draw the soles of the feet together as close to the perineum as is comfortable. Relax the knees outwards, soften the groins.
3. If your back feels like it is straining, either place a folded blanket underneath the buttocks, or place your back against the wall.
4. Clasp the fingers comfortably around the feet, and focus on elongating the spine from the tail bone to the crown of your head.
5. Relax the shoulders, breath deeply into the depths of the belly.
6. Inhaling, lengthen the whole core body, exhaling, bend from the hips forward. Soften the bellybutton towards the toes.
7. Stay as long as is comfortable breathing and continually lengthening and softening.
8. Inhale, come back up gently. Relax the legs out in front of you.

Benefits: This is one of the most highly recommended poses for women. While stabilizing and opening the pelvis, it naturally draws fresh nutrients and blood to the bladder, urinary tract, ovaries, uterus, and kidneys. It helps to relieve premenstrual bloating and cramps. This pose is particularly useful to pregnant women to help ease the pelvis open, lengthen the muscles deep within the groins and hips, and strengthens the lower back, all a great benefit for birth. It is also helpful for women in menopause for maintain health and vigor in the ovaries, therefore helping to stabilize the hormones, and cool the body in the course of a hotflash

Contraindications: If you are beyond three months pregnant follow only up until step 5. Do not bend forward, and stay in that pose as long as is comfortable.

Concerns from the Working Group for Women and Health Protection

*(excerpts from a letter from a coalition
of women's health groups)*

"In Canada, the public relies on Health Canada's Health Protection Branch (HPB) to ensure that pharmaceutical drugs, medical devices and food available are safe and effective. In 1998, the HPB released a paper calling for a full overhaul of Canada's health protection statutes. Although this paper only partially explains the types of changes being considered, a number of the proposals allow for more opportunities to the pharmaceutical and device industries to determine the direction of regulation.

"The changes proposed by HPB affect all Canadians, but particular implications for women. Who play a critical role within their families in making health care decisions, and who form the majority of users of health care services in Canada. Women have also been the main targets of pharmaceutical advertising and public relations campaigns for certain diagnostic tests, drugs and devices, such as Bone Mineral Density Testing, Breast Cancer Screening, and menopausal hormones. Over the last 50 years, Canada has approved drugs and devices that later prove harmful to women's health. These include the early forms of the birth control pill, the Dalkon Shield and Copper 7 IUDs, as well as drugs used in pregnancy, such as DES (diethylstilbestrol) and Thalidomide. A more recent example is the problematic Meme breast implant. A number of drug and device disasters affecting women could have been prevented with

adequate regulatory standards for efficacy and safety.

"Canada's regulatory decisions are made behind closed doors, without public participation or access to the information on which decisions are based. Information from unpublished drug and device safety studies are considered proprietary, even after the product has been approved for marketing in Canada. If a device is approved only for use in women, there is no process in place for consultations with women's rights or health organizations, and no public discussion in which ordinary women could participate.

"The current proposals for regulatory change threaten to further weaken drug and device regulation, introducing a greater degree of industry self-regulation into the process, as well as allowing advertising of prescription drugs to the public (known as direct-to-consumer advertising, which is currently illegal in Canada). In the US, where such advertising is allowed, many of the largest campaigns, in terms of spending, target healthy women. Examples include advertising for menopausal hormones and for long-acting contraceptives, such as Depo Provera that are usually not considered first choice products."

There are three position papers by the Group available at the Centre: *Direct to Consumer Advertising; How Safe Are Our Medication;* and, *To Do No Harm: Why Women Are Concerned About the Dismantling Of Health Protection Legislation In Canada.* For those of you who are wired, their bilingual website is <http://www.web.net/~desact> (under the heading of health protection). The website has other health information and links as well.



Lesbian Health News

Pap smears

A recent article in the British Journal of General Practice suggests that **all women** should undergo **routine screening for cervical smear abnormalities and human papillomavirus (HPV)** even if they have never had sexual contact with men. In a recent study at the Royal London Hospital, abnormal smears were significantly more common in women with a heterosexual history. HPV infection tended to be more common in women with heterosexual history, although the difference was not significant. The authors of the study found that significantly more exclusively lesbian women had never had a cervical smear, 42%, compared with 12% of women with a heterosexual history. Women who identified themselves as lesbian were significantly more likely to believe that they did not need cervical screening.

Sharing health resources

The BC Centre of Excellence for Women's Health announces a new **e-mail list** for lesbian, bisexual & transgendered women's health research, services and activism in Canada. The "lesbi-health" e-mail list has been created to promote the sharing of resources and ideas amongst persons working or interested in the health status, care or needs of lesbian, bisexual and transgendered women across Canada. The list will bring together researchers, healthcare providers, activists, and consumers interested in lesbian, bisexual and transgendered women's health issues. Persons of all sexual and gender orientations are welcome to join the "lesbi-health" list. If you would like to subscribe, just e-mail to: owner-lesbi-health@interchange.ubc.ca with the word "subscribe" <your e-mail address>

The "lesbi-health" e-mail list is one part of a larger health promotion project funded by Status of Women Canada and Health Canada.

For more information, contact Celeste Wincapaw, Communications Manager
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Is it fair
that the
women who
grow the
flowers you
enjoy are
paid less
than 80
cents an
hour?

International
Solidarity
Committee
of the
National
Action
Committee

ATTENTION: ALL HEALTH CARE USERS

The Ministry of Health and the Nelson Area Health Council would like "a community consultation with women to focus on women's health care needs/wants and the integration and coordination of existing services." They are looking for health care users, rather than practitioners. They would like to get perspectives of women from a variety of backgrounds (e.g. moms, older women, women with disabilities, lesbians, low-income women, women of colour). Now's your opportunity! Call the Centre and leave your name and number.

Ms. Ellaneous

Several long-term supporters are moving from Nelson. A big thank you to **Lyn Merryfeather** who has faithfully mowed the lawn, looked after the flowers, washed the linen and helped the library committee for many years. **Jane Steed** has also been a long time member. Among other things, Jane was instrumental in organizing the first Montreal Massacre memorial, shortly after the tragic event happened in 1989. **Bo Conlan** volunteered her musical expertise and knowledge for countless festivals and other events. She also offered drumming lessons to women through the Centre. We appreciate all of your efforts and wish you best of luck in your new communities. Drop-in Volunteer, Libby Johnston, is also leaving us to return to university this fall. Thanks, Libby!

Congratulations to Sally Mackenzie and staff (Kia, Hillary, Cher and Emma) for putting on three successful **Girls Exploring Trades and Technology camps** this summer. Kootenay Women in Trades and Technologies have offered these popular camps for several years now. If you know a girl going into Grade Six or Seven this fall, keep the camps in mind for next year.

Kinesis (*News About Women That's Not In The Dailies*), published by Vancouver Status of Women is in the middle of a break for restructuring (sound familiar?). They will resume publishing in October 2000 and current subscriptions will be extended six months.

Kudos to the COOWS! The Company of Older Women, a group originating from the Women's Centre recently sent a letter to the editors of several papers expressing their outrage at the stabbing of Dr. Romalis and giving their support to medical practitioners who provide abortion services to women.

The International Solidarity Committee of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) has a campaign to raise awareness about the flower industry. Canada imports 90% of its cut flowers from Columbia. In addition to environmentally devastating practices, the **Columbian flower** industry treats **workers** (mostly women) unfairly. For example, workers work double time for Valentine's Day, Mother's Day and Christmas with no guarantee of overtime pay; they work without job security and can be fired for being pregnant; they are exposed to over 150 pesticides and fungicides, many of which are illegal in Canada and the US; are prone to suffer fertility problems and birth defects; they make \$126.00 US per month; and are not protected by independent unions. Write to Lloyd Axworthy, Minister of Foreign Affairs, House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6 and call for the Canadian and Columbian governments to implement an International Code of Conduct that would protect workers and the environment.



WKWA EVENTS

Wild Rising Song Writers' Circle – August 29 at the Royal Hotel. Organized as a fundraiser for the Women's Centre by Doug Smith, featuring Allen Kirk, Colin Davidson, Jan Van Gold, David Turcott and Shemaho, with Kira Soko on mixer. Tix \$5 Advance (Eddy's Music, Live Wires), \$6 at the door or \$5 with nonperishable food item.

Take Back the Night March and Rally – Tuesday, September 19 from 7:30 – 10 p.m. Gather at Lakeside Park, march down Nelson Avenue. Watch the papers for details.

Annual General Meeting - Saturday, September 23, 2000 at 2:00 p.m.
Nelson Municipal Library meeting room – short reports, fab entertainment!!

World March 2000 to eliminate poverty and violence against women, in Nelson, October 17, 2000. More details next issue.



OTHER EVENTS



ANKORS Mobile Needle Exchange – Salmo/Trail – August 21, Kaslo/Nakusp – August 22, Castlegar/Nelson – August 23, Ootishenia/Playmor – August 28, Christina Lake/Grand Forks/Rock Creek – August 29. Call toll-free 1-800-421-2437

Kootenay Gay Pride – March, rally and dance. Saturday, September 2. Meet at Central School at 2:00, rally at Cottonwood Falls Park following the parade, dance to the Seeing Eye Dog Blues Band at the Eagles Hall from 8:00 p.m. – 1:00 a.m. (licensed event).

West Kootenay Women's Council AGM/Regional March 2000 – Saturday, September 9 at Christina Lake. AGM agenda: Incorporating the WKWC as a non-profit society.

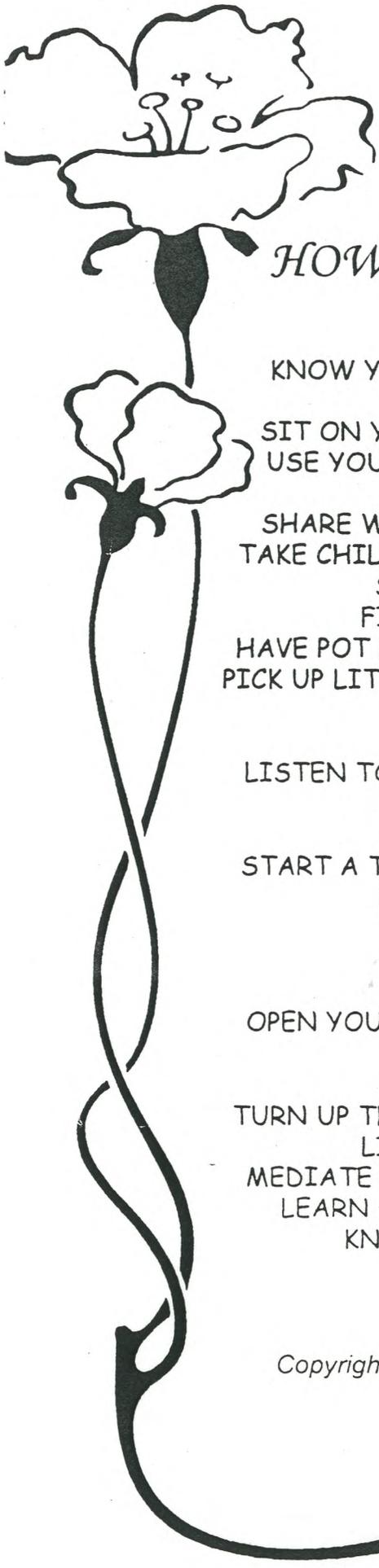
AIDS Walk – September 24. Call ANKORS at 505-5506 or 1-800-4212437 for info.

Aboriginal Women's Day of Action – Rally and River Rafting - September 25. Lower Mainland. Call BC Federation of Labour for information: (604) 430-1421

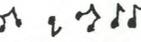
Wise Woman Way of Birth – 5 day Intensive Skills Workshop for doulas, student midwives, birth assistants and childbirth educators. By Gloria Lemay. October 16 – 20 at the Chamber of Commerce, Nelson. Cost \$250 (due Sept 1). To register, call Penny Ruvinsky at 352-2859.

Eating Disorders Conference for professionals in community and hospital settings. October 27-28 Vancouver. Call Anne Cousland at (604) 806-8582

Operational funding provided in part by the Ministry of Women's Equality.



HOW TO BUILD COMMUNITY

TURN OFF YOUR TV
LEAVE YOUR HOUSE
KNOW YOUR NEIGHBORS    GREET PEOPLE
LOOK UP WHEN YOU'RE WALKING
SIT ON YOUR STOOP    PLANT FLOWERS
USE YOUR LIBRARY    PLAY TOGETHER
BUY FROM LOCAL MERCHANTS
SHARE WHAT YOU HAVE  HELP A LOST DOG
TAKE CHILDREN TO THE PARK  HONOR ELDERLY
SUPPORT NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOLS
FIX IT EVEN IF YOU DIDN'T BREAK IT
HAVE POT LUCKS    GARDEN TOGETHER
PICK UP LITTER    READ STORIES ALOUD
DANCE IN THE STREET
TALK TO THE MAIL CARRIER
LISTEN TO THE BIRDS  PUT UP A SWING
HELP CARRY SOMETHING HEAVY
BARTER FOR YOUR GOODS
START A TRADITION  ASK A QUESTION
HIRE YOUNG PEOPLE FOR ODD JOBS
ORGANIZE A BLOCK PARTY
BAKE EXTRA AND SHARE
ASK FOR HELP WHEN YOU NEED IT
OPEN YOUR SHADES  SING TOGETHER
SHARE YOUR SKILLS
TAKE BACK THE NIGHT
TURN UP THE MUSIC  TURN DOWN THE MUSIC
LISTEN BEFORE YOU REACT TO ANGER
MEDIATE A CONFLICT  SEEK TO UNDERSTAND
LEARN FROM NEW AND UNCOMFORTABLE ANGLES
KNOW THAT NO ONE IS SILENT THOUGH
MANY ARE NOT HEARD
WORK TO CHANGE THIS