



Spring is Here!

May 2002



By Laverne Booth & Cheryl Dowden

Yes, that's right, the Women's Festival is back! This year's celebration is scheduled for Saturday, August 10th, 2002, at the Harrop Hall.

Dare to imagine - a whole day of freedom to express ourselves, our ideas and our businesses, our dreams and our bodies.

The Nelson & District Women's Centre and the Habondia Lending Circle are collaborating to bring you a day of workshops by and for women focusing on empowerment, an open stage, an evening dance and possibly a trade fair. We plan "to celebrate women's empowerment and our organizations". In particular, we look forward to celebrating the 30th Anniversary of the Women's Centre. This will be a day for women only to honour our creative abundance (childcare will be provided for small children).

Laverne Booth and Shannon Lanaway have been hired to coordinate and supervise volunteers, facilitate events and problem-solve. If you would like to volunteer, comment or help make decisions regarding the festival, please attend the next meeting and make use of your voice. For meeting dates and times call Laverne @ 355-2868 or Shannon @ 354-1743.

Watch for more information in the July/August edition of the newsletter.

See you in Harrop August 10!!



Administrative Coordinators Report *by Cheryl Dowden*

Since the last issue of the newsletter, there has been the usual flurry of activity at the Nelson & District Women's Centre. Increasingly, however, we are seeing the daily impact of the cuts to social assistance and legal aid, etc. on women's lives in this community. In times like these, the challenge is always to try and model good self-care to women in the community, and it is a struggle for the staff to make sure that we are not volunteering as many hours as we are being paid. The fact that we have been served up another financial crisis by the Liberal government has increased the pressure on the Women's Centre to find alternative core funding by 2004 or face possible closure. This is our current reality, but we are choosing to stay positive and to fight the good fight. We have a lot to celebrate in our 30th anniversary year and we would like to extend a warm invitation to the membership and to the women in our community to come and join us in celebration at the Women's Festival in Harrop on the 10th of August!!!

Prevention of Violence Week - The 4th week of April was the 8th annual Prevention of Violence Against Women Week. The Transition House staff took the lead in this event and it was a huge success. Some of the events that took place this year included: a large mural project at the Nelson & District Youth Centre with over 60 students from Trafalgar participating; Student Voice, a student group from LVR, launched a ribbon campaign and ribbons were distributed throughout the community; the Advocacy Centre did a display on the entire side wall of their building; Olivers did a window display; and there was a mail-out of information to all of the churches. In addition, Thea and I did a radio spot on KCR where we talked about the week's events, the recent concerns around the incidents related to the rape drug in this area and gave out information on community services. KCR also aired the CBC documentary, 'A Murder In The Neighbourhood' that tells the story of a domestic murder of a woman that took place in Toronto a couple of years ago. Afterwards, Anna Maskerine (T-House) and Thea took part in a discussion on the need for a community

response to violence against women. Finally, Rhonda Schmidt from the Advocacy Centre and I launched a workshop series aimed at youth around issues of Body Image, Dating Violence and Internalized Dominance. We did 2 Body Image workshops in Cap C classes at LVR and have received additional invites from LVR to do other workshops in the near future. Overall, the youth involvement in Prevention of Violence Against Women week has been a real cause for celebration.

Community Kitchens - The Capacity Building Project has provided us with funding to pilot several community kitchens in Nelson. Our first kitchen was held on Friday, May 10th at the Nelson United Church. It was an overwhelming success. Our group of 10 people, including two teenagers and a pre-teen, cooked up several delicious entrees that included (a traditional Mennonite Fruit Soup very yummy), a Veggie Pate, a 7 Vegetable Couscous and a Honey Dijon Chicken. Community Kitchens are a great way to discover new and innovative ways to cook nutritious meals that don't require a lot of \$\$\$\$!

The hope is that interested individuals will want to continue the Community Kitchens in a way that will be fun-filled and sustainable. Anyone interested in upcoming Community Kitchens, please call Cheryl or Penny at the Women's Centre.

The Library - everyone loves our library. We have been very fortunate to have a great collection of 2,500 books that have been purchased or donated over the years. Margaret Smith our librarian has worked very hard at maintaining the library system and collection. Unfortunately, there are 70 unreturned books sitting out there somewhere. So, if you have a much-loved Women Centre book that may be lying forgotten in some corner of your house, please bring it back. We don't have the money to replace the missing books and the library relies heavily on the honour system to keep working well. Please help delinquent books find their way home to us. Also, if you would like to donate appropriate books, in good condition, let us know or just drop them off at the Centre. Thank you and happy summer reading.

"The fact that we have been served up another financial crisis by the Liberal government has increased the pressure on the Women's Centre to find alternative core funding by 2004 or face possible closure."



Bear aware



Join Joanne Siderius
On Thursday, June 13th
@ 6:00pm at the
Women's Centre to
find out how YOU can
become Bear aware.

Volunteer Coordinator's Corner

by Thea Trussler

Spring is here and change is in the air! It has been a challenging winter for many, particularly those facing the effects of the liberal government's cuts to services. We have strategised avenues of support and survival for women within the volunteer pool and have been blessed with some concrete tools and people to assist us. On Fridays from 1-3 pm we offer an open support group for women who are dealing with the "new economy" and the family stresses that have resulted. The group is being co-facilitated by Psychologist Joy Green, Bryer and myself. Women have walked out of the sessions with some concrete self-care tools and a feeling of connection with the circle of sisters here at the centre.

We have been very active in the media with a feminist approach on the issues of the day. It is heartening that the media are calling us on a regular basis for commentary and the West Kootenay Women's Association is receiving so much positive exposure on our various projects.

We have struggled with the strategies necessary to survive this government. As a collective we have agreed that pacing ourselves is essential in order to be here for the long run. What is occurring in our province is a reflection of the polarized world issue of corporate agenda at the cost of human lives and our environment.



While things seem all doom and gloom, we have some fun options ahead for stress management. First is a party on June 1st celebrating Gemini's. I am hosting the event at the Harrop Hall beginning at 8pm with a potluck, followed by astrologer Michael O'Connor giving a talk on the "Gemini Riddle". Numerous other astrologers and tarot readers will be available to give some guidance on our paths. After the esoteric part of the evening we are celebrating with local musicians and DJ's, belly dancers and fire dancers. An added treat for the evening is the debut of the "Matchmakers" for your love connections. For more info call 354-9439 after 6pm.

The next bigbig announcement is we are indeed having a Women's Festival this summer. It will be a one-day event with workshops during the day and a dance at night. This will be at the Harrop Hall on August 10. Look for further details in this newsletter!!

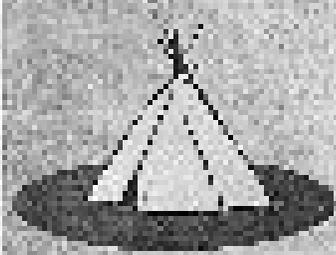
We are seeking volunteers interested in helping with the gardens at the centre. Please call me as soon as possible as we are looking a big raggedy out there!!

A reminder to everyone that we will be closed for the first two weeks of July. This is our annual closure and we will resume regular hours July 16th.

Have a safe and funnnrrrr summer sisters!!



Wanna Win a 16 ft Tipi valued at \$2000?



Danube Tipi's has donated a beautiful Tipi for the Women's Centre to raffle, raising money to pay off the mortgage. The tickets are **\$5.00** and are available at the centre. Buy a couple and help keep us open forever!!

Anti-Poverty Report by Penny Ruvinsky

Art by John Watkins-Chow www.watkinschow.com



Despite the pointy brass bra and flowing cape, try as I may, I still can't fly and have not yet managed to curtail poverty in the Nelson area.

I have managed to get the Community Kitchens off the ground with the help of Cheryl Dowden, participants, and the Capacity Building Project. The first kitchen was a huge success. There is room still available in the third kitchen, call Cheryl or me to participate.

I'm looking for women to complete a questionnaire about poverty. Hopefully, this will help define and create solutions to poverty in our community. Please call me if you are interested in sitting down with me to answer the questionnaire - you don't have to be poor, just willing to share your experience.

To those of you who have been affected by the latest liberal cuts, remember that we have a limited amount of tofu and bagels available most Tuesdays just after 12 noon.

And according to our MLA Blair Suffredine: "Being self-sufficient is something we all want. None of us wants a handout from government. The fact that our government is providing assistance to identify those opportunities to become independent is a positive change in the legislation."

Here's how the liberal government is "providing assistance to identify those opportunities":

Rape crisis centres, child care referrals, resources for battered women, single parent resources, and women's centres are disappearing

Provincial commitment to pay equity is postponed for the foreseeable

Future employment programs, training and apprenticeships for women and under-represented groups are discontinued

Youth and disability employment initiatives are curtailed

Childcare is moving to private-based, for-profit models, with untrained or under-trained caregivers.

Workplace reorganizing does away with service, support and administrative jobs predominated by women

Changes to welfare laws and policies throw families further into poverty

Health care budgets are frozen

Hospitals and senior care facilities are closed

Home oxygen programs are cut

Hearing aid assistance is cut

Increased prescription costs for seniors

User fees for health are introduced

Home support is cut

Minimum wage is cut to a training wage for the first 500 hours

Numbers of teachers are reduced

Tuition freeze is lifted, causing increases of up to 30%

If you'd like to send Mr. Suffredine a more personal thank you for providing us with these opportunities, here's where to reach him:

Mr. B. Suffredine, MLA Nelson-Creston

540 Baker Street, Nelson, BC

PH. No. 250-354-5944 Fax No. 250-354-5937 E-mail: blair.suffredine.mla@leg.bc.ca



The Wonderful Women of WITT

by Shannon Lanaway

As the Women in Trades and Technology Program, WITT, draws to an end, I realize just how fast and intense the five-month program was for me. Many, many mysteries about mechanics, carpentry, electricity, drafting, forging, forklifts and myself were revealed. I finally got the opportunity to arc weld, to cut and create with metal and feel good at it. Ever since *Flashdance*, that wonderful cheesy movie of the 80's, portrayed an independent woman earning her living in a "non-traditional" occupation, I had wanted to get my hands on a welding torch. After the first day of welding I recall thinking that no, this wasn't quite like *Flashdance*, this was more of a hot, sweaty, heavy, sometimes frightful, and sort of toxic stinky experience, I loved it and realized a long standing dream.

The penny dropped for me in Week One of the program when we watched old black and white footage of women involved in trades and technology during the war. I felt an incredible sense of pride and empowerment hearing young and old women, many mothers, talking about their skill and ability to do their jobs well. So, right at the beginning of the WITT program two valuable

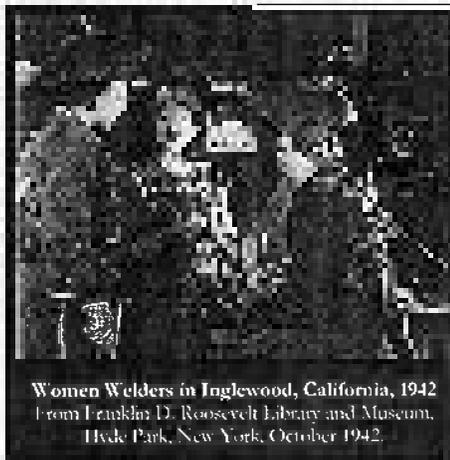
points were reconfirmed for me, the first being that of course women are more than capable of working in all areas of the trades and technologies, and secondly, that we are severely limited in any form of employment when we do not have safe and affordable child care.

Debbie Taylor, our instructor, is an inspirational role model. She is the single parent of a son, an encouraging friend to the women throughout the course, and the first woman to join the pipe fitting welders union. As a single parent myself,

I've received a lot of advice on raising kids, but for some reason the relevancy of this woman's simple and honest words matter the most to me when I consider how my own son is growing up.

I may not look for an apprenticeship in one of the trades or technologies, but I gained the valuable realization that I actually could if I wanted to. I also received the opportunity to better understand the industrial world and what a better place it will be with

more and more women gaining employment in these areas. I am blessed to have met some of them through the WITT program. Thank you all and to those women considering it, I say GO FOR IT, DO IT. Call me @ 354-1743 if you'd like to talk more about it.



Women Welders in Inglewood, California, 1942
From Franklin D. Roosevelt Library and Museum, Hyde Park, New York, October 1942.

"I felt an incredible sense of pride and empowerment hearing young and old women, many mothers, talking about their skill and ability to do their jobs well."



The WITT Program Runs Again!

By Debbie Taylor (WITT's Instructor)

I am proud to announce the successful completion of the first Women in Trades/Technology (WITT) program at Selkirk College. The women explored many Trades and Technology occupations and did hand on shop training in electrical, auto mechanics, carpentry, millwright/machinist and welding. The program components also included career planning and preparation, employability skills (life skills), work experience, occupational first aid, WHMIS (work safety), and fork lift training.

Back by popular demand, a new WITT program will be held September 3, 2002 to December 20, 2002, at the Silver King Campus in Nelson.

Contact Selkirk College (250) 352-6601 for admission requirements and program information.





LUNA- Fertility Indicator *By Shannon Lanaway*

The time is now for women to grab full emotional, physical and psychological consciousness of our ovum, our ovulation, and our fertility. FECUNTY, the alternative contraceptive group, has come together to share knowledge about the subtle changes our bodies experience throughout our amazingly magical fertility cycles.

One interesting way of tracking your fertility is by using the small finger sized microscope called the Luna. Developed by a childless, middle aged B.C. Hydro worker, the little purple lick or spit contraption involves tracking a woman's cycle by magnifying the saline solution in her mouth to indicate whether or not she is fertile. During ovulation, a woman's saliva ferns out, comparable to a fern plant or a number of little river systems or wiggly country back roads on a rural map. If a woman is not ovulating, there are only the small circular contours of her saliva to show up on the slide. With dedication and routine use, you begin to understand your fertility cycle and eventually learn to detect when ovulation occurs, enabling you to



avoid pregnancy.

Theoretically, the Luna is ideal, however I did have difficulty focusing it properly. I encourage women to research, explore and consider the possibilities of this form of fertility awareness. Borrowing or buying a cheap toy microscope can be your first step. Secret Garden sells microscopes for \$45 to \$50. Good Luck on the journey towards becoming more in touch with your own fertility cycle. Please remember that the only contraceptive that guards against sexually transmitted infections (STD's) is the condom. Regardless of where you are in your cycle, to safeguard against sexually transmitted infections - **USE A CONDOM OR OTHER APPROPRIATE BARRIER METHOD.**

Herbal Contraceptives *by Michelle Mungall*

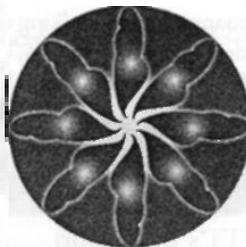
DISCLAIMER: The WKWA takes no responsibility for the use of any herbs mentions in this article.

Western pharmaceutical medicine has come to overshadow herbal knowledge traditionally used to maintain health and treat illnesses. Herbal contraceptive knowledge is no exception. Women use the Pill (you know which pill) far more than any other contraceptive. It is effective and convenient, and so is Cheez Whiz. Cheez Whiz makes your toast more lively and is available at any mainstream grocery store. However, we all know that processed edible petroleum isn't good for you.

The Pill is similar to Cheez Whiz because it is chemicals processed by multinational corporations looking to make billion-dollar profits by manipulating your health. The pill is convenient, but in return, knowledge about your personal fertility cycle and your body's functions are lost to the simplicity of purchasing and ingesting processed hormones. Instead of you knowing your body and having a personal relationship with such knowledge, knowledge that should be yours belongs to faceless institutions that also see you as faceless.

It doesn't have to be this way. Herbs provide alternatives to corporate profits and knowledge alienation, especially when you grow your own herbs or buy local. Herbs require your participation though, so they won't behave in the same ways as the Pill. There is no Herbal Pill. The ways in which herbs work require you to learn about your body and how you can work WITH (as opposed to) your body to maintain health.

One thing herbs can do is help you regulate your menstrual cycle so that you can better pin point your fertile times. Herbs such as chaste tree, wild yam, don guai, milk thistle and dandelion root work together and with your body to tonify the endocrine and circulatory systems for hormonal balance. Unlike any chemically processed pill, effects are gradual rather than immediate because herbs work with your body's learning process.



Mandala by Jai Sequoia

Herbs can be used as vaginal spermicides. For example, 1 part neem oil to 3 parts jojoba oil has proven to be an effective spermicide in initial western scientific studies. Neem is also known to be an effective male contraceptive. Studies are very few, but suggest that when men ingest the neem leaf daily, their sperm becomes immobile.

Herbs can also prevent implantation of a fertilized egg, as well as induce a miscarriage. Using herbs at any time, and particularly for such purposes, should ALWAYS involve consultation and help from a professional. Herbs are great and serious -- like skydiving. You wouldn't go skydiving without instructions, so respect herbs the same way you would jumping out of a plane. As alternatives -- rather than replacements for pharmaceuticals-- herbs empower your knowledge of yourself and the natural world when you learn with help from a professional herbologist.

Birthing WombUnity *by Crea StarFire*

WombUnity is a re-emerging culture of womyn united consciously by their will to initiate, engage, and empower one another in deepening their womb awareness. We are an ancient congregation of individual expressions. Through co creating WombUnity, we can be an organizing force of local humanity that has a benestrophic effect globally. Simply said, it can be a time of powerful magic and massive good news.

Womyn in WombUnity are committed to ending jealousy, self-defeating behaviours, and all acts of self-hate. They possess intact instincts, have flourishing intuitive bodies, and can love (themselves) unconditionally and forgive (themselves) spontaneously through a conscious care taking of menstruation, birthing, aborting, mating or menopausal knowing. They clearly project the heal-

ing power that exists in all things. They creatively nurture and renew with ease. They operate out of a desire to assertively employ gentle power instead of power over or opposing power thereby taking full responsibility for culturing a non-violent reality.

It is true that these are just words and ideas until they become embodied... So in this year of the horse, this time of claiming our collective will power, may we join the galactic web that is forming and may our individual womb-heart-minds and voices unite creatively to build monuments of ecstatic proportions.

The following initiatives and courses are already underway:

The Slocan Valley Womb Sanctuary/ Lunar Power Service Station. 'Moon Hands', Whole Womb Knowing, LunaWomb Yoga, Premenstrual WombYoga, WiseBlood WombYoga, Ovula WombYoga Menopausal WombYoga, Womb Oracle Expressive Art Collective. For more information, or to get involved, please call Crea at 354-4005.

EVENTS



FOOD COALITION meets the second Wednesday of every month, 1PM, at the Nelson United Church, 602 Silica Street (back door please). The Coalition is open to anyone wishing to work on issues of food security in our community.

FOOD CUPBOARD open Monday, Wednesday, Friday, 9AM to 12PM, at the Nelson United Church, 602 Silica Street (back door please). Donations of nutritious food and cash gladly accepted (cash can also be dropped off or mailed to the Women's Centre, 420 Mill Street, Nelson, V1L 4R9, please specify Food Coalition).

ANNUAL WOMEN'S CENTRE CLOSURE: We will be closed the first two weeks of July, reopening July 16, 2002. Penny will be available Tuesday through Thursday through that time and reachable at 352-3177.

WOMEN AND POVERTY QUESTIONNAIRE: I'm looking for 80-100 women to complete a survey questionnaire that will help define poverty in the Nelson Area and give direction to Women's Economic Equality Project (Penny's project at the Women's Centre). The questionnaire is carried out in an interview and takes 40 - 60 minutes. This is a confidential interview and can be completed at the Women's Centre, your home, the park, a coffee shop - anywhere you feel comfortable. If you would like to participate, please call Penny at 352-3177 to set up a time. Thanks.

SUPPORT GROUP: I am interested in starting a support group for parents of teens and pre-teens. If interested please call KHY 505-5332.

INDIA: Thursday, June 6th, 7 PM, at the Women's Centre. Gitta Ridder has returned from 5 months in India where she taught feminist self-defence (Wenlido) to over 400 women. This is a presentation of her experiences.

WOMEN'S SELF -DEFENSE: Wenlido Intensive 2 day program with Gitta Ridder, Saturday, June 1st and Saturday, June 8th, 10AM to 5:30PM, \$50 - \$90 (sliding scale). Know your options when faced with harassment or aggression. Learn how to be effective. For information and registration call Gitta, 352-6597, or the Women's Centre 352-9916.

QUEER WOMEN'S NIGHT: Every Friday, 6:30 - 8:30PM, at the Women's Centre, 420 Mill Street, Nelson. Discussion, videos, relaxed environment. Trans-gendered women welcome.

The Women's Centre is **DESPERATELY SEEKING FEMALE COMPUTER TECHIE** who would love to volunteer services tweaking our computer system. If you have some time please call us at 352-9916 or drop by

WANTED: Seasoned and/or enthusiastic movers and shakers to serve as area volunteer coordinators for the **Women's Celebration Festival** on August 10th, 2002, at the Harrop Hall. We are looking for women who could coordinate: security, first aid, child care, food concession stands, publicity, the sound stage, the evening dance, camping, workshops, and transportation. If you are a female person who would find it fun and easy to organize a manageable piece of this fun event, please call Shannon at 354-1743 or Laverne at 355-2868.

West Kootenay Women's Association Complaints Policy

Ethical Statement

We believe that all women who approach the West Kootenay Women's Association for information and other services shall be treated with dignity and respect.

If any woman has a complaint regarding the West Kootenay Women's Association, its projects, or its operations, the following policies apply.

Policy

1. Definitions:

"Complainant" – the person making the complaint.

"Complaine" – the person against whom a complaint is made, if there is such a person.

1. It is the responsibility of the Chair of the Coordinating Collective to ensure the complaint processes set out in this policy.
2. The Confidentiality Policy applies. However, if the complaint involves another person (the complaine), the complainant shall be informed that the complaine will be approached.
3. If the complaint involves a complaine:
 - If the complaint is not resolved immediately, the complainant and the complaine shall be fully informed of the content and progress of the complaint.
 - The complaine and the complainant have the right to be in attendance at all meetings about the complaint.
 - The complainant and complaine may have an advocate present throughout the process.
4. In order that this policy is accessible to all women, it will be communicated throughout the West Kootenay Women's Association membership by publication in the newsletter once a year and be posted in the Women's Centre.

Procedure

Steps to be followed in dealing with a complaint:

1. Complainant shall approach a staff person with the complaint.
2. If the staff person is unable to resolve the problem immediately, the complainant shall put the complaint in writing on a Complaint Form (Appendix A – available at the Women's Centre) and have it delivered to the Chair of the Collective Committee.
3. If the complaint involves a complaine, then the Chair will inform the complaine of the complaint and arrange a meeting between the two parties and a third party appointed by the Chair.
4. If the complaint does not involve another person, the Chair shall bring the complaint to the next meeting of the Coordinating Collective, where it shall be discussed and resolved. The Chair will be responsible for informing the complainant of the resolution.
5. An outline of the complaint shall be recorded in the Complaints Precedent Book on a "no names basis. The Complaints Precedent Book is located next to the Policy and Procedures Manual in the Women's Centre. The Chair of the Coordinating Collective shall record the complaint outline.
6. The Coordinating Collective shall consider what type of long term learning and policy revisions are necessary in order to improve the work of the West Kootenay Women's Association.



West Kootenay Women's Association News

Published by Nelson & District Women's Centre

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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.

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