

# West Kootenay Women's Association

## NEWSLETTER

420 Mill Street, Nelson, B.C. V1L 4R9 • 352-9916 • July 1998

### Women's Centre Report

June has passed very quickly. Things mostly have been wrapping up for the summer. The Kaleidoscope group came to an end, with a request to regroup in September. If there are other women out there who would like a generic women's support group as an ongoing aspect of the Women's Centre, please let us know. We are also taking names for other groups, including – but not limited to – assertiveness training, survivors of childhood sexual abuse, women who are or have been abused in relationship, etc. If there is a group or workshop you'd like to have happen at the centre, let us know. You can register by calling the centre at 352-9916.

A volunteer training ran every Friday morning in June, and three new volunteers have joined the drop-in volunteer crew. Welcome to Debi, Sara, and Yvet. And thanks to all

the volunteers who continue to make the centre a welcoming place, as well as all the volunteers who do their work behind the scenes.

Holiday time is upon us, with Moe away from June 26 (that's today, bye Moe, have a good holiday) until July 21. Karen leaves July 10 and doesn't return until Tuesday, September 1. Because of the week of overlap, the centre will be closed from 4pm, Friday, July 10 until noon, Tuesday, July 21.

The women's centre committee met Wednesday, June 24 and will meet again Wednesday, July 22. This committee has two new members, who are sharing the drop-in volunteer representative seat. Welcome to Marg and Terry. One thing that was passed at the June 22 meeting is our new confidentiality policy, which will be posted at the Centre:

*The Nelson and District Women's Centre has a commitment to being a safe place for all women.*

*Just by being here, you may hear women reveal things they would not want repeated.*

*Please never repeat anything you hear, unless you would say it if the woman it is about was standing right beside you.*

I wish every one of you wonderful women a fabulous summer. See you in September.

– Karen

Come and see me in August – I won't have Karen to talk to, and sometimes there is a summer lull here.

– Moe

*The Women's Festival Committee is taking a year off ... so this year, there will be a smaller,*

## Do-It-Yourself Festival

*We'll be hosting a*

*Literary Cabaret in Nelson, Fri. Aug. 7  
in the Library, Downstairs, 7:30pm*

*Then, Sat. Aug. 8, at the Vallican Whole:*

*A daytime Drop-in Event,  
a genuine Potluck Dinner, and a*

**WONDERFUL  
WOMYN'S DANCE**

**♣ Buffalo Gals ♣**

*and back by popular demand...*

*Catherine Fisher, DJane'ing  
with an amazing, eclectic variety of music*

*We are hoping to have a line dance workshop  
at 7pm, and have the band start at 8pm.*

• \$10 •

Operational funding provided by the Ministry of Women's Equality, Province of British Columbia

**THE NELSON  
& DISTRICT WOMEN'S CENTRE**

**WILL CLOSE  
AT 4PM, FRIDAY, JULY 10, AND  
RE-OPEN  
NOON, TUESDAY, JULY 21**

# Coordinating Collective Report

At June's meeting, the CC finalized two versions of a Mission Statement for WKWA, to be voted on by all members at the Annual General Meeting in September. The two choices reflect hours of work brainstorming and visioning, and though challenging, the process was a rewarding one.

With only two months left in this CC year of largely new faces, we reflect on the growth we've experienced as a group. Again and again, the diversity of our perspectives astonishes us, and yet, by honouring the differences, we have been able to seek and (usually) find common ground. Believe it or not, we are looking to diversify *even more*, so we are putting out a call for the vacancies we anticipate as of September, when a handful of us will be moving on. We need at least one young woman, under 25, and the voices of a senior woman or two as well. We would also like a greater diversity of cultural backgrounds represented than we currently have. There are many other facets of the women's community we would like to see better represented. Just as one example, we have almost never had anyone on the collective who could represent the viewpoints of women with disabilities of any variety.

This year has taught us that the more diverse we are, the better we can serve the broad needs of women in the community. *Join us* if you're interested in moving WKWA and the Centre into the next millennium. Contact me at 352-6373 if you'd like to come on board, either as a CC member or to serve on one of our active committees.

– Eileen Pearkes

## WKWA hands out awards

On June 25, I went to WE Graham Junior Secondary School in Slocan City and presented two awards on behalf of WKWA. These awards went to the top female students in Science & Math, and Technology. Danaca Block received the Math and Science award. We gave her a book entitled "1001 Science Experiments on Environmental Topics". Jody Roussain won the Technology award. She received a beautiful book on building wildlife habitat, entitled "Beastly Abodes" (I want this book). I said we would continue handing out these awards until there were equal numbers of women in the Science and Math, and Technology fields, so we would (sadly) be presenting them for a few years yet. Congratulations to Danaca and Jody.

– Moe

## Film Festival Wrap-up

The First Annual Kathleen Shannon Film Festival succeeded in raising \$1100 for the hungry bank account of WKWA, thanks in large part to wide-ranging support by community businesses. Oso Negro donated coffee, Nelson Becker lent the big screen, The Body Shop gave \$150, Dan Kuiper,

## Mission Statement Proposals

June 1998

1. The West Kootenay Women's Association will honour the diversity of women's lives, speak out against inequitable treatment, and enhance public awareness of feminism.
2. Believing that every woman has the right to control over her social, economic and physical circumstances, the West Kootenay Women's Association will promote equitable treatment of women. Together, we will celebrate diversity by honouring women of every race, class, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability, age, size, spiritual or political belief.

dentist, and Ron Bogusz, lawyer, each donated \$100, the Nelson Brewing Company donated the beer, and many more businesses gave modest cash amounts or donated merchandise for door prizes. We are grateful to have this community support – without it the Festival would not have been a success.

Smaller than expected audiences took in the many fine films, produced and directed by women about women's lives and issues. The second annual festival will likely be held at a different time of year – the end of May might have been too close to the C4 Conference and the Moving Pictures to have generated enough interest. If you have thoughts on when the festival might best be held next year, contact Fiona at 352-6176.

The Film Festival represents WKWA's desire to sponsor cultural events of wide appeal, and in that it was successful, too. Many women and men who attended over the two days were not WKWA members and had not had much association with it. We signed on one new member, and are proud of the outreach this event provided.

Special kudos must go to Fiona Spalding-Smith, who put hours and hours into making this event the success it was.

– Eileen Pearkes

## GETT Camp Go-Kart Races (Girls Exploring Trades and Technology)

July 10th, 17th and 24th • 1pm

BBQ, races, and prizes!

*Everyone is welcome to come  
and cheer these girls on!*

**Selkirk College, Nelson Campus**

Upper parking lot

*Look for the signs.*

# News from the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC)

// **F**eminists make room for the next generation." This headline appeared in the Toronto Sun on Monday, June 8, the day following NAC's Annual General Meeting in Ottawa. The strength was evident in the voices of young women calling for a seat on NAC's executive and a place in a leadership role. Traditionally, young women inherited the feminist agenda. Now recognizing the need for channels which can address issues specific to or shared by young women, they are seeking increased participation in decision-making.

The media were quick to pick up that there was little room for dissension or for internal strife. Rather the 250+ delegates were united in their endorsement of NAC's position of resisting new federal funding criteria. NAC is refusing to apply for federal money under the new Secretary of State guidelines. Core funding, which allowed for women's equality-seeking groups to operate within a democratic, autonomous and stable framework, has been replaced with project funding, which is erratic, unreliable, time-consuming and competitive.

Over the past decade, women's groups have seen cuts in federal funding and since 1989 no new women's groups have received funding from the Women's Program Fund. Women from Newfoundland and other parts of the Maritimes, as well as women from other provinces shared story after story of the effects on their organizations. Many of them are no longer able to access funding for core administrative and ongoing expenses. In Quebec, for example, two of the province's largest women's groups – those representing women's health centres and women's advocacy centres – have been told they no longer qualify for federal funding.

As Resolutions were brought forward to the AGM, women's voices reverberated, calling on the government not only to restore funding levels but to increase this amount to a toonie for each girl child and woman in Canada. Today the government spends only 53¢: less than a cup of coffee! With the government promoting its "balanced budget", NAC is also pressuring the federal government to apply surplus monies towards reinvesting in the social economy, and in job creation.

## Some highlights from the AGM

A Young Women's Panel with the theme of "Young Women and the Feminist Movement: Accessibility, Linkages and Priorities", stressed the importance for young women to be connected with the herstorical women's movement.

A Women and the Economy Panel included guests from

Nicaragua and Cuba speaking of the struggles women are experiencing globally and strategies women in the North and South need to develop to confront governments around the globalization agenda. NAC through its International Solidarity work continues to expand its linkages with women's groups around the world, and more recently as part of a coalition of women's groups that will in the year 2000 carry out the women's world March Against Poverty. (More about this in upcoming issues.)

Panelists on the Aboriginal Women's Panel described personal experiences of violations of human rights and sexual discrimination against Aboriginal women under the Indian Act.

The AGM concluded with the traditional March to Parliament Hill and a lobby with representatives from the government and members of the opposition.

Although the hours of work begin at 7am, some brief moments for relaxing on-site mobile massage are found in true women's style of accommodating to the demands of their lives. An International dinner on Saturday night rings with song and lyrics, laughter and fun as new friendships are forged, and e-mail addresses exchanged.

*Hannah Hadikein*

## Paddle in the Company of Women

Gather your friends and join H el ene Hogue and Diane Taylor Sunday July 19th for a day of kayaking, adventure, and fun on beautiful Kootenay Lake. H el ene is guide instructor and operations manager with Kootenay Kayak Co. in Procter. She has led sea kayaking tours on the B.C. coast and Kootenay Lake for the past four years. Diane, an avid kayaker, has paddled on the West Coast for many years. They will share with you the joy of being on the water in a sea kayak.

We'll start at 9am in quiet Procter Bay with an introductory lesson and have time to try out your new skills. From there we'll glide past the wild bird sanctuary, out of the West Arm and onto the main lake. Surrounded by a lush

*... continued on next page*

## Kel Print

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# FOR LESBIANS ONLY\*

LESBIAN-FOCUSED POLITICAL DISCUSSION GROUP

- First Nations Lesbians ■ *Métis Lesbians*
- Mixed Race Dykes ■ *Lesbians of Colour*
- Fat Dykes ■ *Non-coupling Dykes*
- Dykes living with physical, mental, emotional disabilities or illness
- *Lesbians of poor or working-class backgrounds* ■ Jewish Lesbians
- *Francophone Dykes* ■ *Lesbians of All Ages* ■ *Immigrant Dykes* ■ *Separatist Dykes* ■ *Radical Lesbians*
- LESBIANS ■

## Hey Dykes!

Let's get together as political, lesbian-identified Lesbians to create a space where we can explore the many issues that affect and confront us *as Lesbians*, without losing our lesbian focus.

Let's talk – *really talk* – about the ways we are divided, the ways we are connected, the things that separate us and the ways we hurt each other. Let's share our knowledge, experience and stories. We need to meet and work together to create and sustain lesbian culture.

*Room and washroom are accessible for dykes using wheelchairs.*

### Where:

**Nelson & District Women's Centre  
420 Mill Street, Nelson, B.C.**

**When: Sunday, July 19, 1998 ■ 2pm**

*Please do not wear any perfume, oils or scents of any kind.*

■ that is, female-born

When the women who are organizing the above group came in with their copy for the Newsletter, that last line threw me for a loop. This restriction does not reflect the position of the Centre or the Association. We don't have a position on this topic.

I have known for some time that this issue was bound to come up, and I wondered what we'd do. After much discussion amongst members of the Women's Centre Committee, we have decided, in the interests of diversity, that this group can meet at the Women's Centre. The Centre strives to be a safe place for all women. If this group needs to be with female-born lesbians to feel safe, we can provide that space.

We are open to proposals from other groups with a different focus. This has all the earmarks of a situation that could divide the community, as it has in other places, and we are determined not to let that happen. We will work together to figure out how to make room for all of us.

–moe

# Library Report

Happy Summer Solstice! My name is Heather, and I joined the Library Committee to take Kristen's place. So now we are KLinda, Marg, Fiona, Lynn and me. I hope I can keep it up-to-date and *interesting*. (If I don't, I'm sure someone will let me know.)

*Nobody Owns Me* by Frances B. Rothluebber was a book we received in the library in May. It is a short book, 125 pages, and subtitled "A Celibate Woman Discovers Her Sexual Power." What the heck, I thought, I'm curious.

It was a good read. Took it with me camping, and enjoyed it – the sort of book that I wanted to underline passages in.

Basically it is about a nun who is existing in "the silent grey sea" (who hasn't been there?) of an imposed spirituality and who moves into knowing that she has a "responsibility to develop her own vitality."

I thought this book would have little relevance to many of us. For myself, I have never been celibate (unless it was imposed), certainly have never been a Sister, and have never been able to find any solace in the Christian way. But – it is not necessarily about any of these things, but rather about something much greater: the melding of spirituality (whatever that means to us) and sexuality (however that might be for us), and the result (however that might come about for us). The book serves as a sort of template how a woman might go about making that connection between spirituality, sexuality and love of life.

There are subtle words of warning in this book: the main character, Marilyn, writes "Why should I have to prove I am as capable, as strong as I think other women are? Besides, how do I know what's really happening inside anyone else?" True enough. It is pretty simple – we don't. And usually what we think is going on, isn't. Marilyn moves to a place of no longer feeling "separated", but she is "searching and finding her way to a life rich in feeling and meaning. I am simply a woman among women." Right on.

By the end of *Nobody Owns Me*, Marilyn has probably found out that statement is not completely true, that we are all owned in some way, and to some degree, at some time. But the luckier ones, the ones willing to move through the crap, are owned by themselves.

– Heather McSwan

## Paddle: from previous page

land of forests and snow-capped mountains, we'll paddle to a quiet beach near Irving Creek for lunch and a well-deserved rest. Our return time to Procter will be 3:30pm.

The cost for this paddling adventure is \$40. Kayaks and all safety gear are provided. Bring a lunch and plenty of water. Custom trips (full moon paddle, overnight, etc.) may also be arranged. To register or for more information, call Hélène at (250)229-4959. We look forward to paddling with you!