

WESTKOOTENAY Women's February 2000

ASSOCIATION ASSOCIATION

General Meeting

by K.Linda Kivi

Over 40 women gathered at the Library on Saturday January 22 to talk about WKWA's current financial crisis. It was a hearting meeting, both because of the turnout and the level of dedication and concern displayed by those who attended. There were hard moments too. But even when we got bogged down, we somehow managed to continue. Jan Inglis, the facilitator, repeatedly helped us focus.

The gist of the matter was that, at the current rate of spending and income, the Association would be out of money by March 31, 2000. Karen Newmoon, the Treasurer, laid out some of the reasons for this situation which include changes in funding, staff turnover and a lack of successful fundraising over the past few years. Put simply, operating a house takes about \$500 more a month than what we bring in.

CC member Nora Johnston presented the pros and cons of four options available to WKWA concerning the house. In the end, however, we ended up not discussing these options given that selling the house is currently not a option due to zoning issues. Women concurred that regardless of whether we end up selling the house or not, we need to secure our equity and not be foreclosed upon. The question of the day became: how do we buy time to make a good decision? In any case, the CC assured us the membership would be part of any decisions made concerning the future of the house.

Various people spoke about what steps are already in process to deal with the financial situation. Mary Crowe sent out over 80 letters seeking funding. Thea Trussler, the interim Women's Centre co-ordinator, is organizing a music festival for April, featuring The Wyrd Sisters. The CC has begun a strategic planning process, intitiated a membership drive and is looking into getting funding

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Special

from the new provincial ministry for volunteers.

Then the brainstorming began.

The suggestion to form a 'Save the House Committee' was quickly changed to a 'Hold the House Committee'. An impressive number of women signed up on the spot. The committee has already begun its work but more help and ideas are always welcome. Members are encouraged to submit any brilliant ideas by mail, fax or e-mail. People should refrain from phoning the Women's Centre with their ideas in order to leave Thea time to do her work.

One campaign set in motion, on the spot, was a pledge campaign. To date, over \$200 in monthly donations have been pledged as well as \$800 in one time donations. Further ideas included:

- * finding private financing for the mortgage in order to bring down our interest rate,
- * setting up a men's auxiliary fundraising team
- * increase the use of the Women's Centre space
- * lobby our funders for increased support
- * seek lump sum donations
- * contact other organizations for letters of support
- * media campaign about why a Women's Centre is useful and necessary in our community.

Special General Meeting #2

Sunday March 5, 1-3pm

Library Basement

Sunday March 5, 1-3pm

Library Basement

a continuing discussion regarding WKWA

All Work, No Play?



Thea, our interim Co-ordinator has been hard at work getting the Centre and the Association on track. Here are some excerpts from her recent work plan report to MWE:

1. "Investigate and make a decision about the house." **Research has been compiled regarding the financial history and the user history of the Centre. To date we have not come to a final decision on the house. Regarding the user history of the house the records indicate that there was no dramatic decrease in the use of the drop in centre after its relocation to Mill St. . Further investigation also indicated that there were large discrepancies in the record keeping and therefore the user statistics are not reliable data.**
2. "Evaluate Current services" **To date a questionnaire has been circulated to local agencies to ascertain the professional view of our services. Also I am circulating a questionnaire to other BC and Yukon Women's Centres to see how they have run their organizations on the budgets allocated them by the Ministry of Women's Equality.**
3. "Evaluate potential services" **This will be addressed after compiling the data from the above mentioned questionnaires.**
4. "Compose a workable contract proposal for the Ministry of Women's Equality" **This will be negotiated after the compilation of the**

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questionnaires, the finalizing of the budget by WKWA treasurer Karen Newmoon and the new job description for the Women's Centre Coordinator.

"Create a realistic job description for the Women's Centre Coordinator" **As a part of the internal review, it has become very apparent that the current model for the coordinating position is unrealistic. My research into other Women's Centre's job descriptions in conjunction with their services has made it very obvious that we need to make the job description more specific and perhaps either fundraise for a position specifically geared to the coordination of the volunteers or seek project funding for the position. To date we are pursuing both avenues. We are applying to "InVolve BC" for a volunteer training program and are following through on fund-raising efforts initiated by Mary Crowe to finance a volunteer coordinator's position.**

"Strategic Plan 1 year and 3 year" **This is not a process we need to complete by March 31 but rather it is a process that through our internal review will enable us to make a realistic final strategic plan for the long term health of the Women's Centre.**

7. "Strategic fundraising plan" **Initiatives have been established. A blessing of the financial crisis is a new interest for involvement by the volunteers.**
8. "Define roles and responsibilities of the coordinating collective" **Having contracted with a consultant in Victoria, Julie Garrison, we are presently working together on a "Board (or CC) evaluation" and job description that will ensure clear definitions of the roles and responsibilities. Coupled with this is the application to "InVolve BC" for a training package for the coordinating collective.**

"Create an accountable communication system" **This is a part of a larger project to acquire a complete policy and procedure manual from another Women's Centre. Requests have been sent to three organizations and we await their response for negotiating purchase or borrowing of their manual.**

- 10 "Establish a viable financial plan" **The budget has been calculated by Karen Newmoon and the fundraising committee needs to confer with her as to a complete package for the financial plan for the new contract. This will be completed by March 31.**

QUESTIONNAIRE TO MEMBERS OF THE WEST KOOTENAY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION:

1. Do you utilize the services of the Nelson and District Women's Centre?



2. Do you have suggestions on services or workshops we could offer in future at the Centre.



3. What do you like/not like about how the Centre operates now?

4. Do you have any testimonials as to how the Centre has helped you in your life?

/ would like to thank you for filling our this questionnaire and sending it back to us via email at wkwomyn@netidea.com, mail us at 420 Mill St. Nelson, V1L 4R9, or fax us at 352-7100. This information will be assisting us in our internal review and subsequent contract proposal with the Ministry of Women's Equality.

f treasurer's News Plash

Woo-Hoo!! We got \$40,000 funding from the BC Gaming Commission!!!! This is in response to a grant application by Mary Crowe for funding for a volunteer coordinator. That's the BIG News. Also, thank you to everyone who has pledged or donated lumps sums and especially to the anonymous donor of \$1000. Totals pledged so far are \$245/month until July and over \$2700 in lump sums. Thank you, thank you, thank you!!!

Point of clarification: the Ministry of Women's Equality does not dictate amounts allocated to specific budget headings, only the bottom line in total funding. They approve the budget we submit and in ttjie draft budget for 2000/01, the facilites allocation proposed is \$500/month (up from \$300/month). | ^JJ

On the Employment Equity Front...



by Ruth Beck

The project is moving along well though most of the current activity is close to invisible. I am doing two main research efforts right now - the first is about employment and hiring while the other has to do with young people's choices about careers.

On the employment side, I have interviewed over 20 people — employers, unions and human resource managers —to find out their best practices around equitable hiring and their approach to providing a welcoming and supportive work environment. I've been finding out about some really good hiring practices and tips for giving employees recognition and support. I will be writing it

up as a report and also going to the media with some of the success stories.

Some employers have a proactive approach in terms of actively championing support for women, visible minorities and others. The majority maintains their commitment to equity through fair hiring practices backed up by policies. Many employers have harassment policies and have made them available to me so that they can be shared. Basically, this is the goal for this part of the research - to share around the region the best practices currently in use as well as bringing in good ideas from outside our area.

As to the connection with young

people, I have been talking to career planning teachers, work placement coordinators, counsellors and youth centre coordinators to find out what would most help them support young people's decisions about career options. So far, an idea has come up to provide an electronic directory (not unlike the old "role models" directory, WKWA, 1992/3) of community members who are willing to put themselves forward as non-traditional role models, speakers or tele-mentors. The people must love their work, enjoy and respect young people and have a knack for communicating in an inspiring way. While this next phase hasn't been finalized or approved yet, it's a likely next step.

Celebrating Lilith

Join women

In a costume of your rebellious self in a celebratory parade, singing & dancing through song, dance

Bring potluck

Library Report

One of the books I'm reading this month is Naomi Wolf's *Fire with Fire*. An excellent book, published in 1993 - I'm either ahead of the times, or I'm a little behind, depending on how you look at it.

I haven't finished it, but will, and recommend it to anyone. I thought the subtitle *The New Female Power & How it will Change the 21st Century* was somewhat far reaching. However, she proposes a changed way of looking and thinking and examines previous evolutions of feminism. She speaks of 'power feminism' and provides a documented basis upon which to build a more encompassing form of feminism. "Wolf offers concrete strategies for a revitalized, positive, and inclusive brand of feminism that does not divide women by class or sexual orientation." An extremely thought-provoking book that spoke to what I need to hear and also what I didn't want to hear. Suggested reading.

International

Women's Day

Wednesday March 8

3:00-6:30 pm

United Church



Woman on Soapbox

by Anat Brink

Operational funding provided by the Ministry of Women's Equality, Province of B.C.

The Women's Centre in Nelson is going through a crisis. A crisis is a time of death, change, transformation and rebirth. It's a window of opportunity.

You may ask, what's this have to do with me?

Well, everything and nothing!

If you believe that the Women's Centre is for abused and destitute women, for troubled teenagers, feminist and lesbians and if you do not belong to the above categories, then indeed there is not much there for you.

However, if you are willing to look at the Centre as a place that can facilitate your personal journey as a woman, a place that can enhance your personal growth and

transformation, then this is your cup of tea (or perhaps a bowl of potent stew!)

What would you like to happen at the Centre? Workshops, support groups, casual encounters? Would you like it to be a place where you can share with other women your skills, experience, companionship?

We invite you to be a partner in midwife-ing the Centre through its rebirth process. Reach to your heart and womb wisdom and share with us your visions, goals, aspirations, dream and ideas.

Woman on Soapbox is a new column. Members are encouraged to submit their ten cents worth (inflation). The opinions expressed here belong to rockin' woman above.

Join the West Kootenay Women's Association

Be part of the oldest women's organization in B.C.—we welcome *all* women and strive to address the issues women face in society today.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____ Postal Code: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____ E-mail: _____ Website: _____

Annual memberships are on a sliding scale, from \$30 to \$15. Memberships are valid until September's annual general meeting each year. Fees are pro-rated depending on when you join. Memberships are also available for a 4-hour work trade.

Membership gets you a newsletter, access to our awesome selection of books in the library, and supports an organization that's been advocating the rights of women in the Kootenays since 1973. Make cheques payable to: "WKWA"

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