

WEST KOOTENAY

WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

December 2000

Women's Centre Report

by Thea Trussler, volunteer coordinator

The snow is here and indoor pursuits of coffee, tea and heartfelt discussions are the order of the day. Drop in is busier than ever and a real sense of it being a warm hearth for all makes coming in for work something to look forward to each day.

The volunteer training began November 30 and will run for three weeks, break over the holiday season and then commence for the last three weeks of January. We have numerous dynamic volunteers with excellent skills and ideas to regenerate the energy so needed here. A reminder that I will no longer have funding for my position come mid February and therefore it is essential that there be a strong pool of volunteers to run all the necessary aspects of the Centre to ensure its survival. We are working on numerous grant proposals to keep me employed but to date no luck. I'm asking the guy in the red suit if he can give me that for Christmas!

The free store is still going strong. It is an excellent resource for additional gifts for the holidays. Many times we have had new, never worn items donated and talented women have reworked old clothing into amazing new creations.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Jeff from Silverking Soya Foods and Deb and Dana from the Only Bakery for their continued donations and support to the drop in. You are all on the nice list of Santa with just enough naughty to be interesting!

Happy holidays to all the sisters out there!!

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**Centre closed
Dec 25 - Jan 2**



Woman on a soapbox!

by Maggie Shirley

In October, I had the opportunity to attend a conference in Vancouver sponsored by the Ministry of Women's Equality. The conference hosted by then-Minister Joan Smallwood reflected the shift in priority from stopping the violence to promoting women's economic equality. While the conference promoted several key concepts for equality in the workplace, such as pay equity for the public sector and equity issues, it failed to address poverty and women outside the workplace – the most obvious issue for women's economic equality. Because of the apparent lack of class analysis, women who are the most oppressed (e.g. First Nations women, women with disabilities, immigrant women, women of colour, etc) were generally not there as presenters nor had their issues raised. However, a group of us (largely from women's centres, immigrant women's groups, First Nation's women's groups, etc.) met to talk about poverty and put together recommendations for the ministry, including one that MWE make the elimination of poverty its top priority in its economic equality strategy. Since the weekend of the conference, the BC cabinet has shuffled and we now have a new minister – Evelyn Gillespie. I was pleased to receive a letter from her recognizing that women are not able to fully participate in the economy until harassment and violence against women are ended and that her "primary commitment ... is stopping the violence against women". The letter does not mention poverty, but she did acknowledge the need for more consultations "to hear the concerns of Aboriginal women, visible minority women, and disabled women." She will hear about poverty. She also intends to continue Smallwood's worthwhile initiatives such as the Women's Workplace Equity Office.

Another indication of Gillespie's positive leadership is the fact that continuing contracts for women's centres are once again being negotiated. Currently, we receive funding year-by-year – the new contracts would cover a three-year period with possibility for renewal. While there are a number of issues to be examined, generally it will give centres a firm foundation to work from. I recently joined a provincial reference group that is in discussion with the Ministry. The Ministry aims to have the contracts in place and signed by

March 31, the end of the current fiscal year. The timing is tight. But from the perspective of the Women's Association, having contracts in place and signed before a provincial election would help us gain ground, rather than wait for who knows what decision from another possible new minister.

Early indications are that Gillespie's approach is supportive and promising. Let's hope she delivers on that promise and stays Minister of Women's Equality for some time.

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The West Kootenay Women's Association News
is published seven times a year. Call the Centre
for submission deadlines.

Employment Equity Project Report

by Ruth Beck

Great news! Selkirk College is planning to hold a WITT course next year. This is a response to current labour market conditions and a request made by Marcia Braundy, Lana Grant and myself to Selkirk's president Marilyn Luscombe in August.

Right now, the College is in the process of developing a formal proposal, with our participation. A meeting was held Nov. 23 to confirm community and industry support and to request input into the program. The meeting was well attended by local employers (Peter Kiewit Sons, Columbia Power, Columbia Hydro Constructors, Cominco, Celgar), unions (Carpenters, Steelworkers and Building Trades Council), government agencies (HRDC, Women's Equality, Apprenticeship, Skills BC), women's organizations (WKWA and Kootenay WITT) and local MLAs offices (both Corky's and Ed's). All people present confirmed their support for the WITT program. Next steps are to submit the formal proposal to various funders and advocate for funding support.

Last newsletter, I mentioned that I would introduce my Advisory Committee. First, I want to say that it has been really positive for my project to have a group of community advisors. It has helped guide the project and presented me with new ideas for action. I will introduce some of the members in this issue and more next issue. Maybe some of these folks will be new to you.

Susan Wallach, the Vice Chair of the Selkirk College Board is a new member of the Advisory Committee. Susan is a lawyer by profession and has her office in Nelson. She replaces Audrey Moore as the "Selkirk rep" but I've managed to keep Audrey on the committee. Audrey Moore speaks her mind and I'm grateful for it. She is a self-declared "citizen of the world" and brings a rich perspective of concern for people of all ages, races and backgrounds. Jan Morton is the Executive Director of the Greater Trail Community Skills Centre and a Continuing

Education Coordinator for Selkirk College in Trail. Jan is thoroughly dedicated to social justice, a great strategic thinker and a "mover and shaker" when it comes to community-based training and education.

Edie Negrieff is a loans officer with Kootenay Savings Credit Union. She is a great listener and contributes thoughtful input. Marilyn Strong is a private communications consultant. She is bursting with great ideas about how to get a message out to the public. She helped me research web sites and develop the communications plan. Nelson Ames is one of two men on the Committee. Nelson is the Medical Health Officer for this region. His interest is in reducing poverty as well as making links between employment equity and health. Marsha Carew is a labour activist who, in her former work, was in the Office and Technical Employees Union. Marsha is currently attending Selkirk College and, despite being busy, continues to offer a solid worker rights perspective to the Committee.



WKWA Report - Promising News from SWC

by Maggie Shirley

The new coordinating collective got off to a great start when they met with Lorraine Cameron and Agnes Lui from Status of Women Canada earlier in November. Cameron indicated that there was a good chance that we could get up to three year funding for a project based in the Centre as well as renewed funding for the Employment Equity project or its successor. Apparently, the funding is not regionally based and there aren't specific limits on funds within our area. The possibility of having two positions based in the Centre and maintaining the EE project would provide stability and mobility for the Association and the Centre. It was refreshing to meet face-to-face with the funders and for them to speak honestly and candidly about their work. Stay tuned for more details of the applications.

We currently have eight women plus the two coordinators on the cc. The returning members are Katya Hayes and Nora Johnston (co-chairs) and Marnie Lehr (treasurer). New cc members are Michelle Deines (alternate co-chair), Jessie Manley (Women's Centre committee rep), Ashala Yardley (fundraising committee rep), Rose Stapenhurst (drop-in volunteer) and Caroline Shooner (health issues liaison). They bring a wide variety of experience and interests. It's impressive to see the level of energy and commitment everyone has shown already.

The cc will be participating in a full day retreat on December 17, 2000 where they will have an orientation to the collective and begin the process of strategic planning. While the Association is definitely on an upswing from last year's crisis, we still need to define our role in the community, set goals and make realistic plans based on our funding, our finances and our capacity. Through this process we hope to have contingency plans, based on several funding scenarios and a solid fundraising plan for the Association, particularly the house.

Finally, the cc and staff would like to invite you to a membership appreciation party to coincide with our annual winter holiday celebration. All members are welcome to attend the party on Wednesday, December 20 at 7:00 p.m. This will be an excellent opportunity to meet the cc, share solstice greetings with your sisters and allow us to express our gratitude to you for your continued support of the Centre and the Association. See you there.

Ms. Ellaneous

Note: if the address label on the front of the envelop says "DUE", this will be the last newsletter you receive from us unless you renew your membership. We do want you to keep receiving the newsletter, so please fill out the renewal slip and send it in.

A long-needed pro-choice committee is in the works. The committee, open to people who support a woman's right to reproductive choice, will work to maintain our right and speak out when that right is threatened. Call 352-3177 if you're interested.

Apologies, Rita! In the last Ms. Ellaneous column, I congratulated author Rita Moir for winning not only the Vancity Book Prize but also the BC Book "Tuller" prize. The name of the prize is not Tuller but the Hubert Evans Award for non-fiction. Either way, we're proud of you, Rita.

KINESIS newspaper, published by the Vancouver Status of Women will be back in January 2001, after a long restructuring process. Currently, they are looking for guest editors. Details available at the Centre

Watch for the return of the Library News column next issue.

YOU Can Help End Violence Against Women

(adapted from an article originally published in Canadian Women's Health Network by Jennifer Howard)

1 LISTEN TO WOMEN AND BELIEVE THEM. When women tell you about violence they have experienced in their lives, believe them. Often we don't want to believe that horrible things happen to people we care about, especially when other people we care about are the perpetrators. It is extremely rare for a woman to make up a story about rape or abuse. You may be the first and only person she tells. Believe her and support her decisions, without being judgmental.

2 HEAL THE VIOLENCE IN YOUR OWN LIFE. Most of us are survivors of some type of violence. Many of us fears becoming a victim of violence. Take care of yourself and do what you can to help yourself heal – emotionally and physically. Get counseling. Join a support group. There are a number of sources of support available.

3 BREAK THE SILENCE. When you're ready, tell other people your own story of survival. Breaking the silence about our experiences reduces the shame that surrounds abuse and can empower other people to talk about their own experiences.

4 MAKE VIOLENCE YOUR BUSINESS. Keeping violence against women private helps no one. If you believe that someone is being abused, ask them. They might not tell you right away, but it will send a signal that you are someone they can trust. If you don't know how to handle the news that someone you know is being abused, call the Women's Centre or other support service for advice. Don't put yourself in danger by intervening in a violent situation. Call the police.

5 RAISE NON-VIOLENT CHILDREN. Talk to them about violence in society and violence in their schools. Help them find non-violent ways of resolving conflict. Encourage imaginative, cooperative and non-violent play. Challenge

socialized gender roles. Challenge the use of violence (spanking) as punishment.

6 USE YOUR TIME, ENERGY AND MONEY TO PROMOTE WOMEN'S EQUALITY. Women make up the vast majority of victims of relationship and sexual violence (82% currently). Get involved in organizations working to end poverty and violence against women. Make donations. Speak out at work and in social situations. Demand that political parties make concrete plans and policies to increase women's equality and then vote.

7 SPEAK OUT AGAINST NEGATIVE MEDIA IMAGES. If you see an ad or commercial that uses violence against women to sell products, write to/fax/e-mail the company. If acts of violence against women are passed off as entertainment, notify the Broadcast Standards Council or the Canadian Radio and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC). Make your own woman-positive media.

8 HELP GIRLS BECOME STRONG. Help the girls in your life develop confidence and strong self-esteem. Let them know they're important as individuals, in or out of relationship. Talk frankly to them about sex and dating, stressing respect and their right to choose.

9 ENCOURAGE PEOPLE WHO COMMIT VIOLENCE TO GET HELP. Don't judge. Let them know their behaviour is unacceptable and that there are counselors and support groups to help them change.

10 REMEMBER. Participate in December 6 Day of Action and Remembrance and other events to raise awareness about violence. Celebrate life.

Women's Centre – 352-9916
Transition House – 354-4357
Advocacy Centre – 352-5777
RCMP – 352-3511
Nelson City Police – 352-2266

December 6 Remembrance and Day of Action

December 6 Remembrance and Day of Action

For the fourteen women murdered in Montreal - December 6, 1989
And all women who have been killed

We invite you to join us in sharing how violence against women has affected your life - in your home, at work, as a woman in our society

12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Nelson United Church basement

(corner of Josephine and Silica - physically accessible)

Soup will be available for a donation -
proceeds to pay for a tree at Lakeside Park in honour of murdered women

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News from the Philippine Women's Centre

Ousting Estrada - Filipinos in Canada have joined the growing people's movement in the Philippines and worldwide to oust current President Joseph Estrada. President Estrada's list of anti-people policies is extensive: from his war-mongering over the people of Mindanao that has unleashed a massive displacement of hundreds of thousands of internal refugees, to his suspension of the peace negotiations with the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), to his subservient approval of the return of the U.S. military through the Visiting Forces Agreement, to his welcoming back of several cronies of former dictator Ferdinand Marcos, to his role in the rising price of rice, oil, and other basic necessities. Latest news from the Philippines reports that the Philippine Congress itself has voted for the President's impeachment - making Estrada the first Philippine President to be impeached.

Here in Canada, Filipinos are also taking up this call, as his rule has added greater burden to the thousands of Filipino migrant workers in Canada working as live-in caregivers. Now, more than ever, they feel the growing pressure to send money back home to their families, forcing them to work even harder, under even more precarious conditions. Also joining this international effort to oust Estrada are Filipinos in Canada who are weary of the real possibility of the return of martial law and the return of the dark ages of fascism in their home country. As cries for his dismissal grow stronger, Estrada is inching closer to openly declaring martial law. With this real possibility, the international community and the Canadian public should anticipate a worsening of human rights violations and gross abuses.

Filipino Nurses respond to the BCNU - Talks of using the BC Nominee program to recruit foreign-trained nurses from abroad has exposed the B.C. Nurses Union's (BCNU) ignorance on the issue of foreign-trained nurses. Ivory Warner, president of BCNU responded that Canada should not be 'raiding' nurses from the Third World when they are in dire need in their home countries.

Sheila Farrales of the Filipino Nurses Support Group (FNSG) responds that Warner is "entirely missing the point. The point is that foreign-trained nurses, including Filipino nurses, are already here, but are not working as nurses. Instead, they are working as domestic workers. Warner is blatantly denying the presence of hundreds of Filipino nurses, qualified to practice right here in BC."

Historically in the 1960s, Filipino nurses came to Canada and practiced as nurses. It has only been in the

last 20 years that hundreds of Filipino nurses have had no other option but to come to Canada as domestic workers under the Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP). Pleading ignorance to programs like the BC Nominee program and despite meeting with FNSG in March of this year, Warner continues to deny foreign-trained nurses already qualified to practice in Canada.

Under globalization, nurses are leaving the Philippines in droves to come to countries, like Canada. With the First World's need for cheap labour, Canada denies the need to fulfill professional occupations like nursing, and systematizes that denial through Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC). CIC continues to give zero points under the immigration system for nurses applying for landed immigrant status. Such denial leaves Filipino nurses no other option but to enter through the LCP.

FNSG asserts that nursing institutions like BCNU must recognize the diversity of Canada's population as a nation of immigrants, and the diversity of the nursing profession itself. "What is required is to recruit Filipino nurses to work as nurses, not as domestic workers, and to liberate them from the LCP!" exclaims Cecilia Diocson, also a member of the FNSG.

In the Vancouver Sun, Warner continued that "with the demand, we need to get people wherever we can, as long as they are qualified". FNSG member Leah Diana maintains, "This has been what FNSG has struggled for over the last four years. Ms. Warner must realize that BCNU needs only to look in their own backyard for over 200 qualified Filipino nurses demanding to be recognized."

FNSG also argues that it is not a question of being qualified. FNSG has twenty Filipino nurses who have passed all the accreditation requirements, including the nursing exam, yet the LCP demands the women remain domestic workers for two years before applying for landed status, which would enable them to practice nursing.

FNSG continues to demand the granting of interim permits to foreign-trained nurses, especially Filipino nurses. It awaits the implementation of the BC Nominee program to recruit nurses from the Philippines to work as nurses, and also continues to lobby the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration Canada to scrap the LCP and to grant points to nurses applying for independent immigrant status.

In the heat of this province-wide health care crisis, FNSG will continue to educate, advocate and organize for the recognition of Filipino nurses in Canada.

WKWA EVENTS

DECEMBER 6 REMEMBRANCE AND DAY OF ACTION – this year we are organizing a sharing circle to talk about how violence against women has affected our lives - personally, professionally and politically. Organized by the Women's Centre on behalf of the Violence Against Women in Relationship committee. Soup and refreshments available for an affordable price. Proceeds to help support the VAWIR committee purchasing a tree at Lakeside Park as a year-round community reminder to end violence against women. Circle will be held at 12 noon, December 6, in the basement of the United Church (physically accessible), corner of Silica and Josephine.

CC MEETING – Thursday, December 7, 4:30 p.m. at the Women's Centre. Members welcome. *Note: cc meetings are usually held on the first Wednesday of the month. The meeting will be held on Thursday this month only.*

MICRO LENDING/PEER LENDING – Wednesday, December 13 at 7:00 p.m. at the Women's Centre. Join Andrew Earnshaw from Community Futures for an evening of information sharing and discussion (see article page 6).

MEMBER APPRECIATION PARTY/WINTER HOLIDAY CELEBRATION – Wednesday, December 20 at 7:00 p.m. Come celebrate the season with your sisters and celebrate your support of the Centre.

WOMEN'S CENTRE CLOSED – Monday December 25 to January 1. Reopens January 2.

Upcoming in January! **GROWING INTO FREEDOM** – a 10 week group for women in midlife and **ENERGY ANATOMY** – a 10 week group examining the work of Carolyn Myss. More details in next newsletter. Co-facilitated by Rose Stapenhurst, Human Services Counsellor and Julie Kucera, MSW.

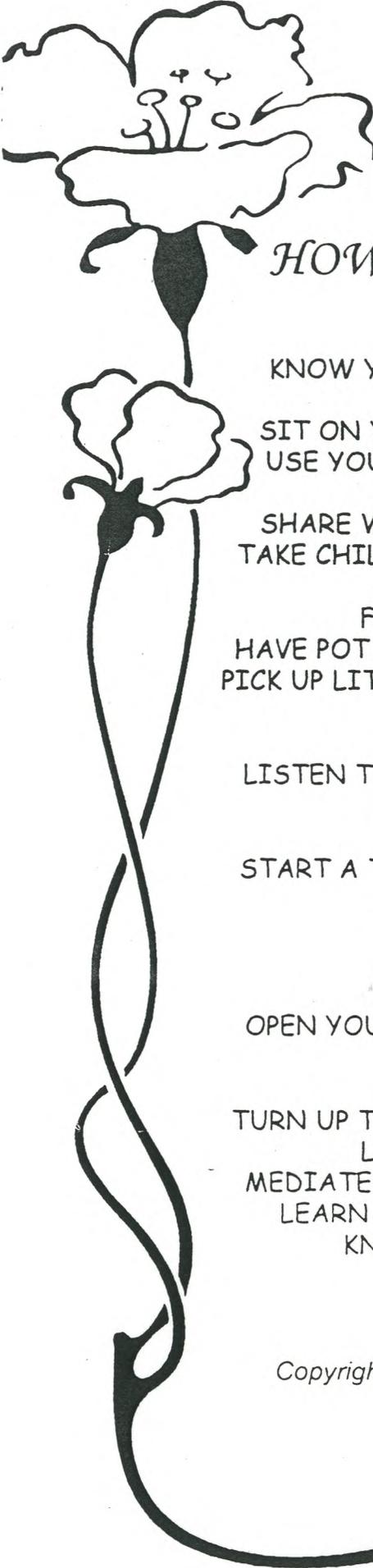
OTHER EVENTS

WORLD AIDS DAY – Thursday, December 1. Local events include display and information tables at Selkirk College campuses (Castlegar, Grand Forks, Trail and Nelson) from 11:00 to 1:00 p.m. and a non-denominational Candle Light Memorial, Nelson United Church, 7:30 p.m. Contact ANKORS for more information at 505-5506.

PURSUIT OF RED – Friday, December 2. A show of acrylic paintings by Rachel Yoder. Opening from 4 – 6 p.m. at the All Season's Café, 620 Herridge Lane. Exhibit continues throughout December.

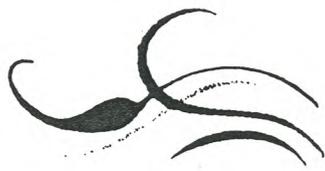
EQUALITY AND CANADIAN WOMEN: OUR COURTS, OUR CASES, OUR CHALLENGES and FEMINIST LEGAL THEORY IN CANADIAN COURTS – a presentation by Laura Wood, former lawyer and current professor at SFU. Thursday, December 7 from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. Heritage Inn – Bentwell Room. No host bar and appetizers. Presented by the West Kootenay Women's Council.

Operational funding provided by the Ministry of Women's Equality, the BC Gaming Commission, Status of Women Canada and through donations from our community.



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



INTERESTING QUOTES



“The economic dependence of women is perhaps the greatest injustice that has been done to us, and has worked the greatest injury to the race.” —*Nellie McClung (1873-1961)*

“I have a brain and a uterus, and I use both.” — *Pat Schroeder, New York Times Magazine, 1972, in response to a question about being both a mother and a Congresswoman*

“I’m tough, ambitious, and I know exactly what I want. If that makes me a bitch, okay.” — *Madonna*

“The best that ‘beauty’ offers is given to us all by right of femaleness. When we separate ‘beauty’ from sexuality, when we celebrate the individuality of our features and characteristics, women will have access to a pleasure in our bodies that unites us rather than divides us.” — *Naomi Wolf*

“One of the things about equality is not just that you be treated equally to a man, but that you treat yourself equally to the way you treat a man.” —*Marlo Thomas*

It is hard to fight an enemy who has outposts in your head.” — *Sally Kempton*

“If a woman ignores these wrongs, then may women as a sex continue to suffer them; there is no help for any of us-let us be dumb and die.” —*Elizabeth Barrett Browning*

“I knew in the moment when the pain was greatest...that there is no God known to man that cares about children or about women. And that the God of woman is autonomy.” —*M’Lissa, Possessing the Secret of Joy (by Alice Walker)*

“People call me a feminist whenever I express sentiments that differentiate me from a doormat or a prostitute.” —*Rebecca West*

“The most exciting thing about women’s liberation is that this century will be able to take advantage of talent and potential genius that have been wasted because of taboos.” — *Helen Reddy*

“Women want to be free to choose from the same range of options that men take for granted. In our quest for equal pay, equal access to education and opportunities, we have made great strides. But until women can move freely and think freely in their homes, on the streets, in the workplace without the fear of violence, there can be no real freedom.” — *Anita Roddick*