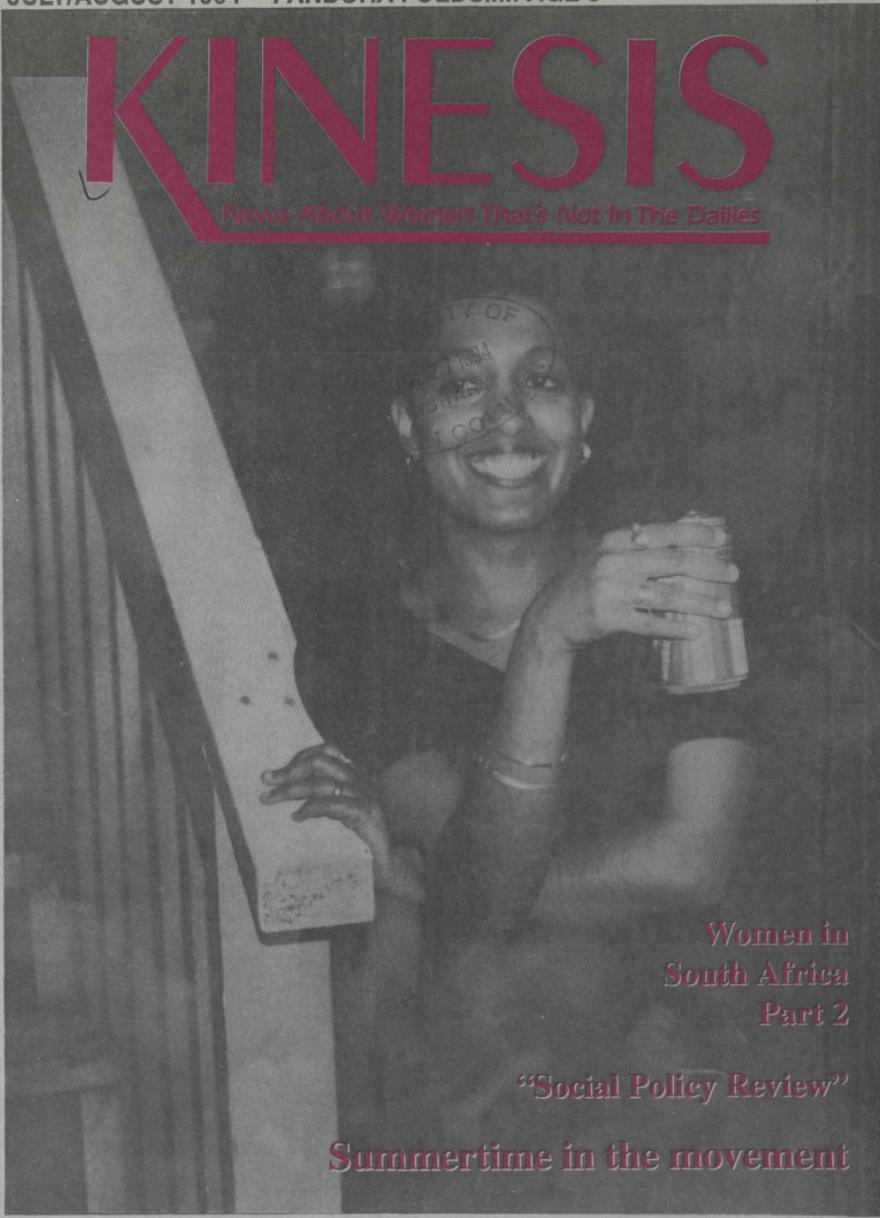


SP

KINESIS

News About Women That's Not In The Dailies



Women in
South Africa
Part 2

"Social Policy Review"

Summertime in the movement

INSIDE

KINESIS CELEBRATING 20 YEARS 1974-1994

KINESIS

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Kinesis welcomes volunteers to work on all aspects of the paper. Our next Writers' Meeting is Aug 2 for the Sept issue and Sep 6 for the Oct issue, at 7 pm at *Kinesis*. All women welcome even if you don't have experience.

Kinesis is published ten times a year by the Vancouver Status of Women. Its objectives are to be a non-sectarian feminist voice for women and to work actively for social change, specifically combatting sexism, racism, classism, homophobia, ableism, and imperialism. Views expressed in *Kinesis* are those of the writer and do not necessarily reflect VSW policy. All unsigned material is the responsibility of the *Kinesis* Editorial Board.

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Charmaine Perkins
at the *Kinesis* Benefit
Photo by Fatima Jaffer

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SUBMISSIONS

Women and girls are welcome to make submissions. We reserve the right to edit and submission does not guarantee publication. If possible, submissions should be typed, double spaced and must be signed and include an address, telephone number and SASE. *Kinesis* does not accept poetry or fiction. Editorial guidelines are available upon request.

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Kinesis Benefit Thanks

Thank you to all the individuals, organizations and businesses who donated to our raffle and door prizes:

The Blue Ewe * The Ridge Theatre * Persimmon Blackbridge * Press Gang Publishers * Octopus Books * Women In Print * Women's Work Screenprint * Bubblegum Clothing * Vancouver Folk Festival * Marina Dodis * The National Film Board * Pacific Cinematheque * Octopus Books * Vancouver Photo * Simon Fraser University * Cynthia Low * Clearwater Restaurant * Shani Mootoo * Vancouver Women's Bookstore * Continental Coffee * It's All Fun and Games * Highlife Records * Spartacus Books

Thanks to those who made food and drink donations:
CRS/Horizon Distributors * Norman's Fruit & Salad * Strawberry's Bakery * Uprising Bakery * Eastside Family Place

Your generosity helped make
our 20th anniversary a success!

We really appreciate your support!



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Sandy Scofield at the *Kinesis* Benefit 19



We decided this month's "As Kinesis..." should focus on what went down at (and around) the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC's) AGM and Conference that was held recently in Ottawa.

There was a huge turnout for the AGM. About four hundred women—representatives of NAC member groups, individuals, friends of NAC, and guests—attended! However, the general mood of women seemed unusually and noticeably subdued. Mosty, the tension seemed to have more to do with what women are facing in their everyday work back "home," than to anything at the AGM itself. I guess everyone's feeling the pinch from recent budget cuts, rising unemployment, the backlash against women, people of colour, etc, social policy review [see page 9] and the other nasty things the right-wing has been pushing on us lately...also, women arrived in Ottawa shortly after we had lost the free vote on same sex rights in the Ontario legislature... [see page 41].

NAC's conference theme this year was International Perspectives: Women and Global Solidarity, and to facilitate it, NAC brought in (co-sponsored by other progressive organizations) a number of international guests from South Africa, Peru, Mexico, Uganda, India, Zimbabwe, the US, and Bangladesh. Canada-based guests included Sharon McIvor of the Native Women's Association of Canada and Laurie Montour, a Mohawk biologist from Kahnawake.

We got the brief update on what's happening and where NAC's at with the upcoming United Nations World Conference on Women and the concurrently-held NGO Forum in September 1995 in Beijing. Women were in agreement that the Beijing Conf. is an opportunity to put pressure on world governments at an international level, that a move to boycott the conference because of Beijing's human rights abuses has to

come from women in China and we will endorse or join such a move; and that NAC work to break the silence on lesbians in official Canadian government presentations and UN documents for the conference. More on this in an upcoming issue.

Things kinda turned up on the AGM floor as women took lives at using, abusing and denouncing good-ole Robert's Rules of Order [don't ask. Just call a "point of order" when you feel like it, okay!]

On Saturday, NAC member organizations unanimously passed the motion that Social Policy be a priority campaign in the coming year. The key objectives are "to influence public debate on social policy, reverse the right-wing orientation of current government social policy, and put women's issues and social equality issues generally back on the political agenda."

Sunday was kinda different. Brewing dissatisfaction over the paper on violence against women, 99 Federal Steps, written and presented by members of the Vancouver Rape Relief and Transition House, threatened to blow up when a few women raised the issue of a myriad of omissions, inaccuracies and other weaknesses in the paper. Rape Relief had presented the paper on the first day of the AGM, making passing reference to complaints they had received regarding a few omissions...probably adding fuel to fire for the women who felt themselves to be "the few" omissions. The motion was to adopt 99 Federal Steps as NAC's framework policy statement on violence against women.

In the end, all parties came to a compromise. The NAC executive and Rape Relief agreed to friendly amendments that included adopting 99 Steps as "a framework working paper..." on which to build NAC's policy statement on violence against women; as well as the NAC executive's commitment to looking for avenues of funding to sponsor a countrywide consultation on violence against women to facilitate development of a compre-

hensive policy statement for NAC on the causes, prevention and treatment of violence against women.

About 100 women stayed for Monday's lobby with the political parties. In the first hour, we met with the Bloc Quebecois. About 15 minutes into our questioning, we realised BQ leader Lucien Bouchard really had not known [had forgotten?] that NAC supported self-determination for Quebec! NAC member groups had lots of questions for the BQ on Aboriginal self-determination. Bouchard says 1) the BQ supports self-determination for Aboriginal peoples in Quebec but 2) they just want to know what that means before they go ahead and actually support self-determination for Aboriginal peoples (!!!!!).

After the BQ, we had an hour set aside for our meeting with the Reform Party who had already informed us had no intention of showing up to meet with any "special interest" group. (1) One of the women there lived in Preston Manning's riding and suggested we march over to the RP's offices and demand our democratic right to meet with the "populist" party. So we did. The security guards on the Hill were extremely aggressive [and racist too] so rather than risk getting hurt, we gave up our attempt to meet with the Reform hacks and sat down in the lobby chanting for a few minutes. Then we headed back to the building where the lobby with the Liberal government was to take place...but were refused entrance. After much haggling [it's a long story], we made it back in seconds before the Liberals showed up. The lobby was extremely successful, one could say, for many reasons. NAC met with the largest contingent of cabinet and government ministers in 10 years! Many of us didn't understand the gobbledygook Lloyd Axworthy gave in response to our questions about the Social Policy review, and Allan Rock was inscrutable (?) on the question of same sex partnership benefits/rights.

After that, NAC held a press conference to talk about the four-day AGM and

lobby. A lot of media showed up but all but one of the questions focused on the 20 minutes of NAC's oh-so-bad-behaviour, demanding to see the Reform Party. Get this. One reporter asked why NAC had gone along with, no, planned (?) the protest... "don't you think now this will take away from any serious media attention the NAC conference could have received." Says Thobani: "How can I answer that? You're the media, and we're hoping we get some serious attention."

The media continue to trash NAC for what was perhaps the smallest part of our activity in Ottawa, and the most grassroots action all week... What does surprise is the intensity of the backlash, the unchallenged right-wing media attack on the women's movement in this country... The Reform Party then called for NAC's funding to be cut... and one Liberal Party MP said, "Well, we don't think NAC is a special interest group but to prove it, NAC should give up their funding so that the money can be used directly to help women in need...!!!! Boggles the mind! Anyway, the largest women's coalition in the country just had the best turnout at their conference in years and raised some pretty heavy issues, and did some wonderful international solidarity building... [oh yes, some of the international guests were thrilled with the idea of exercising our democratic rights by marching on parliament to demand rights... "It's a new concept," said the guest from Zimbabwe, "and we'd probably face better treatment from the guards at parliament there than you did here!" It's a quote!... and that's that.

Newsflash: A Vancouver Island lesbian softball team won the silver medal at the Gay Games held in New York last month.

Dates to Remember: August 9th is South African Women's Day. The Vancouver International Comedy Festival runs July 28-August 7. "Racing Thru Space" is an exhibition that runs in Vancouver at Artspeak to July 23rd. The West Kootenay Women's Festival 1994 is on at the Vallican Whole Community Centre in Slokan Valley, BC, on August 5, 6 and 7. Call 352-9916 for info.

That's it for now...Have a great summer and we'll be back, louder and stronger (and more rested and legible) in September!!



THANKS

Our thanks to Vancouver Status of Women members who support us year 'round with memberships and donations. Our appreciation to the following supporters who became members, renewed their memberships or donated to VSW in June:

Melanie Conn * Sharon Costello * Barbara Curran * Tanya De Haan * Nancy Duff * Mary Frey * Marnie Hancock * Faune Johnson * Barbara Kearney-Copan * Inger Kronseth * Barbara Lebrasseur * Leanne Macdonnell * H.R. Matrix Ltd. * Maureen McEvoy * Daya McIntosh * Margaret Mitchell * Louise n'ha Ruby * Deborah Nilsen * Lynda Osborne * Susan Penfold * Janet Riehm * Claire Robillard * Janet Shaw * Shellah Thompson * C. Wyanark * Shelagh Wilson

We would like to say a very special thank you to the following supporters who have responded so generously to our annual spring fundraising appeal. The ongoing support of VSW donors, as well as the support of many new donors, is crucial to the expansion of VSW's vital services and programs in the face of continued government cuts to our funding. We are very thankful to:

Catherine Aikenhead * Sam Archer * E.A. Bennett * Margaret Blight * Patricia Bossort * Kate Braid * Elizabeth Briemberg * Pamela Bush * Rosemary Casson * Janie Cowley * Jacquelyn Chapman * Paula Clancy * Jo Coffey * Marlene Coulhard * Werner Dettwiler * Catharine Esson * Rebecca Frame * Catherine Fretwell * Deborah Gibson * Lynn Giraud * Barbara Grantham * Lois Hansen * Rebecca Holmes * Nola Johnston * Janet Kellough-Pollock * Angela Kelly * Roberta Kirby * Jennifer Kirkey * Mary John * Janet Knechtel * Abby Lippman * Leanne Macdonnell * Lucy Martel * Estelle McLachlan * Heather McLean * Mary Moore * Lucy Moreira * Jane Munro * Patricia Murray * Lou Nelson * Patricia Neufeld * Deborah Nilsen * Karen Nordinger * Colleen Penrowley * Carol Pettigrew * Neil Power * M.A. Read * Catherine Russell * Patricia Sadovy * Helen Shore * Veronica Strong-Boag * Margit Stroud * Neysa Turner * Pamela Walker * Gayle Way * Janet Wiegand * Mary Winder * Kim Zander * Maggie Ziegler

Finally, we would like to thank the Vancouver Municipal and Regional Employees Union for their generous support of our recent project to send a delegate to South Africa for the elections, and we would like to express our appreciation to Women's Work Screen Print and Design for their generous donation and the beautiful 20th Anniversary T-shirts for Kinesis.

Well, we did it! We survived our 20th anniversary Benefit, even though it happened right in the middle of production. We even had some fun!

And we also got to show off our snazzy new 20th anniversary t-shirts. If you want to be as cool as we are, check out the back page of this issue and find out how to get your very own Kinesis t-shirt.

Thanks to all those who made our Benefit a great success [see page 19]. Thanks to our emcee for the evening, Miche Hill; and to our sound tech, Cat Renay.

And thanks to the present and former editors of Kinesis—Jo Dunaway, Gayla Reid, Patty Gibson, Emma Kivisild, Esther Shannon, Nancy Pollak, and Fatima Jaffer—who agreed to come up on stage and answer a few Kinesis trivia questions. We appreciate your good humour and can see how you survived in the job. It wasn't that humiliating, was it?

And of course, thousands of thanks to those women who helped out before, during and after the Benefit: Faith Jones, Winnifred Tovey, Fatima Jaffer, Shannon E. Ash, Robyn Hall, Jennifer Johnstone, Sur Mehat, Agnes Huang, Lissa Geller, Gladys We, Cynthia Lou, Elsie Wong, Marsha Arbour, Rose Baldry, Wendy Frost, Sue Vohanka, Esther Shannon, Lana

Winston, Lynne Wanyeki, Cat L'Hirondelle, Christine Evans, Yee Jim, Karen Backman, Moira Keigher, Wendy lee kenward, Tanya de Haan, Teresa McCarthy, Leslie Virtue, Miche Hill, Ellen Woodsworth, Suzanne Baustad, Jazmin Miranda, Lael Sleep, and Karen Mahoney. We couldn't have done it without all of you.

Many thanks to Eastside Family Place for letting us the kids, that is play with some of their toys. We, the kids, loved them. And thanks to Archer Pechawis and Alan Zisman for loaning us sound equipment and to Mike for helping us set it up.

And a final thanks to all the women and children who came out to our Benefit. We hope you had fun! If you couldn't make it...we missed you...

And now, on to other Kinesis business. A sad goodbye to Gladys We who is leaving the Ed Board. We hope you get to go where no Ed Board member has gone before, Gladys.

Welcome this issue to new writer Liz Kendal, and to new production volunteers: Colleen Benn, Praba Williams, Rose Baldry, Colleen Hennig, Hilary Mason, Alli Brown, and Judy Cook.

Well, we're going to take a break and get ready for the second half of our 20th anniversary. So, have a fabulous summer, and we'll see you in September!

Feminist publishing in Canada:

Pandora folds

by Faith Jones

Pandora, Nova Scotia's feminist newspaper, has closed down, but will be remembered fondly by feminist and other activist groups for fighting and winning a landmark human rights case.

The case, which was resolved in March 1992 after two years in the human rights hearing process, upheld the right of a disadvantaged group to organize separately from members of the advantaged group. The hearing was the result of a complaint brought by a man who was angry that *Pandora* refused to publish his letter because it was a woman-only newspaper. The human-rights commissioner who heard the case ruled that a woman-only policy did not "cause material or substantial harm to men, particularly in comparison to the benefit to women of having a women's only publication" and that "men have adequate opportunity to express their views and opinions in the mainstream media without entry into this women's place."

At the time of the decision, women from the *Pandora* collective described the victory as mixed. The amount of time and energy expended on the case was far beyond what they had anticipated. This drain on their energy continued after the case was over, as they struggled to raise nearly \$40,000 in legal fees. (Later their lawyer, Anne Derrick, wrote off over 50 percent of their bill.) Following the human rights case in 1992, the collective only managed to produce one issue of *Pandora*. Earlier this year, they issued a newsletter which appealed to women in the Halifax area to bring their energy to the newspaper.

Esther Shannon, a former editor of *Kinesis* who followed the *Pandora* case, says the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission (NSHRC) acted against the interests of women by allowing the case to go forward. Commissioners recommend only three to five percent of complaints go to a board of inquiry; the rest are dismissed without a hearing. It is not uncommon for human rights commissions in various provinces to dismiss cases on the basis that they are "vexatious," or harassment. By recommending the *Pandora* case go to a full-scale inquiry, "the state sanctioned that level of harassment," Shannon says.

The eagerness of the NSHRC to go forward with the complaint against *Pandora* contrasts sharply with the state's response when *Pandora* was under attack. The day after the Halifax media reported on the case against *Pandora*, members of the collective found a death threat on the office answering machine. The police did not investigate, on the basis that "an answering machine can't be threatened." The resulting fear of both individuals threatening them and state-sanctioned harassment did result in a some women pulling away from the collective, *Pandora* spokespeople told *Kinesis* at the time [see *Kinesis*, Dec./Jan. 1992].

Shannon says human rights acts and their governing bodies do not acknowledge the difficulties facing groups such as *Pandora*'s collective when they have to defend themselves against charges that they are discriminatory. "There are amazing difficulties in publishing a feminist periodical," Shannon says, noting that there now isn't another feminist newspaper in the Maritimes, as previous publications in New Brunswick and Newfoundland have also closed down in the last decade. "It was a difficult atmosphere to publish in, and a very diffuse community that they were trying to serve, and the state played a major role in destroying that initiative."

Shannon points out that, even without the stress and strain of facing an inquiry into their publishing policies, most feminist newspapers do not last long. Counting *Pandora*'s ac-

tive publishing history as going from 1986 to 1992 (the last issue was put out in September 1992), it lasted about an average length of time for a feminist newspaper, Shannon estimates. Members of the *Pandora* collective point out that the major issue in the closing is not money but energy [see box]. Anne Derrick gave them as much time as they needed to raise her legal fees, and the newspaper actually had enough money to put out the next issue.

Others active in feminist publishing agree that energy is the most important aspect of their work, especially since most feminist periodicals operate on a largely volunteer basis. Penny Mitchell, editorial co-ordinator of *Herizons*, a national magazine from Winnipeg, points out that lack of energy was also a factor in the recent closing of *Healthsharing* Canada's national women's health journal [see *Kinesis*, April 1994].

"I wonder if it's fair to assume that feminist publishing should exist on a volunteer basis," Mitchell says, pointing out that a lot of other industries are subsidized much more than feminist journalists are. "Women have lives, they have to work." She says it may be necessary for feminist periodicals to begin raising their subscription prices to allow for more paid and less volunteer work.

Mitchell says the closing of *Pandora* is a depressing reminder of the times we are living in. "It's another blow to the feminist press," she says. She says the closing isn't the result of "a failure to do anything properly. Feminist publishers are famous for putting out high-quality work on very little money."

However, *Pandora*'s legacy does live on in the precedent-setting case that they fought and won. Unlike other similar cases, in which a publication has fought for their right to determine their content on the basis of freedom of expression, *Pandora* chose to show that women as a socially disadvantaged group needed a venue in which to promote equality. The difference between these two approaches is that the freedom of expression argument has been used primarily by the mainstream media against marginalized groups (most notably in the case of the *Vancouver Sun* versus Vancouver's Gay Alliance). Had they chosen to go that route, "*Pandora*'s win could be somebody else's loss," Derrick told *Kinesis* in an interview last year [see *Kinesis*, July/August 1993].

Instead, the precedent set by the *Pandora* case could prove beneficial to other groups, not just feminist ones, in fighting for their right to allow access and membership only to members of a socially disadvantaged group. This issue is very much alive in Vancouver, where July's "Writing Thru Race" conference lost its federal funding because the daytime sessions of the conference were for people of colour and First Nations people only.

Although *Pandora* won its case, there is no guarantee that the idea of promoting equality through autonomous organizing has taken any hold in the culture generally. It is still possible that a human rights commission, whether in Nova Scotia or another province, could allow a similar complaint to go forward to a board of inquiry. Should that happen, the *Pandora* ruling will be very important indeed.

"The feminist movement is very proud and grateful for the work that they did," Mitchell says. "It was incredibly courageous—and I can't even say that *Herizons* would have chosen to do the same. It's amazing that they were willing to put their energy into it. It would be nice if that energy could regenerate itself maybe in a few years with new women. They didn't close down because they ran out of things to say."

Faith Jones wonders what you can do with a women's studies degree and a bad back



An open letter to *Pandora* supporters

Dear Sister, Friends, Supporters,

The *Pandora* collective has decided that it is time to stop publishing *Pandora*. This decision was a long time in the making. We come to it with a vague sense of relief, pain, and optimism for the future.

The individual members had a variety of reasons for choosing this option. Some had the increasing commitments to family, job, or school; others were ready to move on to other political fronts, using their energies in new ways; some felt they lacked the skill, time, or energy to carry *Pandora* forward; some were new members, enthusiastic and excited about the possibilities of working on *Pandora* but not familiar with the process.

Over time, the *Pandora* collective has grown, changed, shrunk, and re-emerged—part of the natural ebb and flow of our women's lives; the ebb and flow of the collective effort and organizing. Our present was tied to our past—at times, too much so. Our discussions, our work, our consensus and our lack of it were an integral part of the paper we produced.

Our decision to dissolve *Pandora* grew in part out of a community meeting at the North Branch Library in Halifax on March 17. While a few women came to help keep *Pandora* going, we realized we had neither the time nor the energy to continue. We finally, and reluctantly, had to accept that the thread of *Pandora* would be broken. It was an ending and needed to be honoured as such.

Since 1986 the *Pandora* collective has woven together the words of women. The work has been beautiful and empowering—a testament to the strength, diversity, pain, and resilience of women around Nova Scotia. The weavers have been many. Hundreds of women have been part of the production of *Pandora*. Hundreds more have had their words or graphics published. Women have touched each other, found each other, and grown as a result of the conversations within *Pandora*'s pages.

Women who have never seen their experiences reflected in the pages of the mainstream media saw that others shared their experiences. Women who have never heard their voices and shared their stories with each other. As we read each others' words and stories we made connections and learned more about our common experiences as women. It was on this basis the *Pandora* met the challenge of the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission and reaffirmed the right to be what they had always been—a newspaper by, for, and about women.

The *Pandora* collective recognizes the importance of a women's media to women's lives. We believe that other papers, newsletters, computer bulletin boards and 'zines will be created as women feel a need to express themselves and connect with each other. Although *Pandora* will no longer be published, we will keep our postal box until the end of 1994. If you wish, contact us at P.O. Box 8418 Station A, Halifax, NS B3K 5M1.

Pandora has a sizable collection of magazines and newspapers which we acquired through exchange subscriptions with other groups. We are interested in passing these materials along to women's groups, transition houses, or others who might be interested. We also wish to sell a Macintosh Plus computer with an 800K external drive and an ImageWriter 2 printer. We are asking \$500.00 or best offer. Shipping is extra. If you, or your group, is interested in any of these items please contact us via box number by July 30. We will consider all responses, with preference going to other women's community groups.

To all of you who have ever been involved in *Pandora*, as readers, writers, producers, distributors, collective members—Thank you! Together we created something to be proud of.

In Sisterhood,
Pandora

Ontario and lesbian partnership rights:

Ontario bill defeated

by Shannon e. Ash

A bill that was to recognize lesbian and gay relationships in Ontario law and give access to rights currently enjoyed by heterosexual couples, has been defeated. On June 9, in a free vote on third reading of Bill 167, the Ontario legislature voted against lesbian and gay partnership rights. Lesbians are now analysing this defeat and strategizing for the future.

The Ontario New Democratic Party (NDP) had made spousal rights for lesbians and gays part of their platform. Sexual orientation had already been included in the Ontario Human Rights Code under the previous Liberal government. With only 18 months left in the NDP's mandate, the government introduced Bill 167, the "Equality Rights Law Statute Amendment Act." The bill would have amended the Human Rights Code and over 50 other statutes to include same-sex couples under the definition of "spouse" and "marital status," married and common-law heterosexual couples are currently included. These statutes give benefits, obligations, and rights based on spousal status—they do not define marriage, which is under federal jurisdiction.

Some of the rights Bill 167 would have recognized include: access to employment benefits already offered to heterosexual employees; the option to enter into a domestic contract that grants property rights upon relationship breakup; the ability to enter into contracts for automatic inheritance rights; the ability to apply for adoption as a couple (currently an important issue is that of adopting a partner's child whom a lesbian may be co-parenting); and recognition of partners and families, to allow, for example, direct involvement in medical care, and change of names. Along with these rights go the respective responsibilities.

Rather than enforcing the usual party discipline, the NDP allowed a free vote, which meant NDP MPPs did not have to vote according to party policy. Those opposing lesbian and gay rights lobbied against the bill. The Catholic archbishop for the Toronto area, Aloysius Ambrozio, sent out a pastoral letter condemning same-sex spousal rights. Form letters opposing the bill were distributed at churches. (Ambrozio gained some notoriety last year after an interview in which he expressed racist/anti-immigrant sentiments and defended the former Fascist dictator of Spain, Francisco Franco.)

Lesbians and gays also mobilized, to support the bill. The Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights in Ontario (CLGRO) raised money and formed the Campaign for Equal Families (CEF). Twenty-seven Ontario communities have formed member groups of CEF. Progressive groups supporting the bill included the Ontario Federation of Labour, the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC), Urban Alliance on Race Relations, and the Ontario Association of Professional Social Workers. Mary Woe Sims of CLGRO noted the importance of

alliances, pointing out, "If the Right can win on our rights—whose rights are next?"

The bill passed first reading with a vote of 57 to 52 on May 19, but 18 MPPs were not present. Just before the bill went to second reading, Ontario Attorney-General Marion Boyd, who was presenting the bill, offered to amend it (amendments cannot technically be made until after the second reading, when the bill goes for study.) A bill must pass third reading and be proclaimed to become law.

Boyd amended the bill so that lesbian and gay couples would not have access to adoption rights and the term "spouse" would not be redefined—rather, a separate definition of "domestic partner" was proposed. [This effectively meant that the only change would be in the Human Rights Act.]

However, in third reading, the Bill was defeated, 68-59. All the Conservatives voted against it, and all but three Liberals. Twelve members of the NDP also voted against the legislation, effectively dooming it.

Spectators in the public gallery protested the vote as it was announced, and were pushed out of the building by security guards, many of whom wore rubber gloves, [apparently to avoid "catching" AIDS]. That night, thousands of lesbians and gays marched to the Ontario legislature in Toronto. This was followed by another rally in Toronto that weekend, as well as rallies in Ottawa, Vancouver and other cities. In Vancouver, the rally was sponsored by the International Socialists and brought together 300 people.

Barbara Findlay, a member of the December 9th Coalition, a woman lesbian and gay rights group, says there are positive and negative aspects to the Bill 167 experience: "The issue is front and centre in every Canadian household, which it hasn't been before now. That is a very important step forward."

"It is also a defeat—a momentary defeat [with] the potential for becoming a bigger defeat. I think we're at a crossroads—it could get better or it could get worse."

Findlay says she thought the mainstream media attention did not give adequate consideration to all the rights being contested. "I think media attention has focussed almost exclusively on the financial benefits that are conferred by being in a relationship...and what gets ignored [is] non-monetary recognition."

Such recognition includes, for example in the case of death, the fact that same-sex partners are not currently entitled under the Cremation Act, to pick up the body of a lover or friend. In the case of a woman who dies without a will, the woman in a lesbian relationship with her is not entitled to a share of the estate.

"These are not issues of payment of public funds or worker funds, these are issues between people," says Findlay, including the rights of children of lesbians and gay men. When a biological parent dies, a same-sex partner who is co-parenting the child has no legal right of access to the child.

Same-sex partnership rights are not only about spousal benefits, they concern the recognition of lesbians and gay men's relationships. Some lesbians have expressed concern that winning the right to spousal benefits is not a real victory for those who do not have access to such employment benefits to begin with.

Says Findlay, "We must never lose sight of how benefits got distributed in the first place. Who gets what as a benefit in this society is a decision of social policy...and those benefits are not conferred fairly, as matters now stand."

"For lesbians and gays to get benefits on the same basis that heterosexual partners do remedies one small inequity but leaves intact a much greater unfairness. We have to continue to be aware of that fact and work towards a more fair distribution of resources."

Even lesbians and gays who do receive benefits may be reluctant to apply for them because of workplace homophobia. In a recent case, a man applied for reimbursement of medical expenses for his male partner. As his application moved through the bureaucracy, information was leaked that he had done so, and the man was assaulted by some co-workers.

Meanwhile, federal justice minister Allan Rock has informally proposed creat-

ing a category of "dependent relationships" that would include not only lesbian and gay relationships, but adult children with aged parents, and platonic friends.

Findlay says this approach does have some value: "It means we're looking at the actual lives that people live, to see who is important to them."

However, such a proposal would probably be "studied to death [with input from] so many different communities of people, much of it contradictory," that there is no clear direction, which is often "confusing" to Canadian governments, and nothing may come of it.

In BC meanwhile, a review of the British Columbia Human Rights Act is currently under way. At a conference organized by the December 9th Coalition and attended by special advisor Bill Black, who is conducting the review, lesbians and gays in attendance pushed for the idea of recognizing "interdependent" relationships, which would include recognition of many family-type relationships that don't presently fit the "traditional couple" model. But they emphasized that lesbian and gay relationships should also receive specific recognition to avoid the potential of lesbians and gays to be left out in the cold again.

Shannon e. Ash is a lesbian rights activist, and a regular writer for Kinesis.

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BC community nurses:

Nurses fight back

by Teresa McCarthy

On the month after they went on strike, community nurses in the Lower Mainland, BC, are back at the negotiating table with the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD). The nurses have been providing only essential services since May 26, and began rotating strike action on June 17 in four municipalities to elicit support. They have been without a contract since December 31, 1991.

Community Nurses provide three kinds of care. They work in preventative programs such as immunization and new-mother clinics; they provide home care for such things as early hospital discharges and palliative care; and they provide home support and assessment for Long Term Care patients, such as people with Alzheimer's disease.

Essentially, the Lower Mainland's 800 community nurses do the same work as the 1,800 health nurses employed by the Provincial government, but they are employed directly by their municipalities. The nurses are asking for parity with the other 22,000 nurses in British Columbia in wages and benefits, as well as job protection for casuals.

Historically, health, fire and police departments have been under the jurisdiction of the municipalities of Richmond, Burnaby, North Vancouver, and Vancouver. And although the provincial government now provides funding for these services, the municipalities have been allowed to retain this control. Contracts for these services are negotiated through the GVRD, which means that local, regional, and provincial levels of government all have some part in administering the services.

According to Monika Stoki at the Vancouver Community Nurses' strike headquarters, this jurisdictional confusion is one obstacle to settling the contract.

"No one is accepting ownership of the dispute," says Stoki. She says that each level of government has declared the nurses' demands the responsibility of the others. Stoki says the mayors of the four municipalities should put pressure on the GVRD to settle the contract, because, "health care in their communities is their responsibility and the constituents in their communities are not being serviced."

According to Jean Greatbatch of the British Columbia Nurses Union (BCNU), the GVRD is comparing community nurses' pay rate to those of municipal clerical and outside workers, instead of comparing wages of nurses in other communities and in hospitals who do the same work. She points out that when contracts for police and firefighters are negotiated, they are given parity with their provincially administered counterparts. A flyer in support of the strike produced by BCNU states: "The municipalities are not showing respect for those nurses expected to be the foundation of health care reform" in the province.

Community nurses are also demanding coverage under the Employment Security Agreement (ESA), which is part of the BC government's New Directions in Healthcare initiative. New Directions is intended to bring health decision-making and services "closer to home" by creating Community Health Boards and transferring hospital-based services to the community, while centralizing such things as purchasing and contract negotiations in the government's drive to cut costs.

In the transition from hospital-based to community-based health care, the number of health care jobs will decrease, as hospital services that are already provided in the community will be eliminated. The government's reasoning is that this will decentralize health services and make them more accessible to

the communities that need them, while avoiding duplication of services in the same region.

Many community nurses support the principles behind New Directions in Healthcare, says Maria Mackay, a Vancouver community nurse, because "we work closer to home. We just don't want to be left out."

clause of the ESA, given the difference in wages and benefits between hospital and community workers.

Community nurses however are worried that they are being set up to compete with hospital nurses in their health regions who, without the protection of the ESA, could displace them and that community nurses who retain their jobs will not have their wages brought up to hospital levels.

But, she says, the provincial government is "not fighting Ottawa on behalf of the people of British Columbia" and demanding that the federal government "reestablish levels of funding that were in place in 1984." As well, she says, if communities aren't given enough money to provide services, it leaves an opening for for-profit health care providers to come into British Columbia.

She adds that the transfer of services from the acute-care sector to the community care sector may also allow for-profit health insurers to enter British Columbia, because only hospital-based and physician's services are guaranteed coverage under Medicare by the Canada Health Act. Fuller says the federal government may not be able to amend the Act to include community care because they are locked into the Free Trade Agreement, and the United States views health care as a commodity.

If New Directions is not implemented cautiously, both the community care providers and those who use community care lose. Women, as both primary users and providers of community health care, are the ones who will be most affected by a prolonged strike. According to a 1993 HEU report, women "are the overwhelming majority of caregivers in the home and in the community," and women make up "more than three-quarters of all those in occupations in medicine and health."

Laura Robertson has worked as a casual Community Health Nurse for six years. She teaches prenatal classes, works on a call-in basis at Vancouver Health Units, and is part of the nursing staff in a joint project between the Vancouver Health Department and the Women's Hospital that provides home-based nursing care for new mothers.

Robertson says her work is rewarding in part because it is largely health care for women by women. Many women feel more comfortable phoning the nurses at health units with their questions than taking them to their doctors, she points out.

Robertson worries that the people who benefit most from the preventative services that community nurses provide are going to suffer most from a prolonged strike. "It's difficult to walk away from our clients because we feel acutely the damage it's doing...A lot of the problems that [women] are going to encounter [such as breastfeeding problems] are going to have a lifelong impact on their children."

She adds, "I don't think these people will be knocking on City Hall's door" because, for example new mothers, who aren't being given the option of breastfeeding support during the strike, may not be aware of the services they are missing.

As well, "it's a really difficult thing not to work and not to have the income," since, like many women, she is the sole support for her family.

Robertson is fully supportive of the strike since she believes the wage inequities show that community nurses "are not being valued in the same way as 22,000 other nurses in this province."

Robertson notes that "it is difficult for nurses to be assertive on our own behalf—we're used to doing it for other people. So in a way, [the strike is] going to have a positive effect [in that it has shown us what it means] to be in a labour union, and allowed us to learn what's involved."

Community nurses are still in negotiation with the GVRD as *Kinesis* goes to press.

Teresa McCarthy lives in Burnaby and wanted to respect nurses watching her mother work.



Betty DaSilva (left) and Elaine Jay (centre) on the picket line

The provincial government is giving "no money and no support for those who are already providing these services in the community," says Vancouver community nurse Stoki. The government is saying that with New Directions, "they value community health and value community nurses—but we're not seeing that."

Community nurses, along with community health workers like those working in transition houses and early childhood development, have not been included under some New Directions' labour protection plans. The ESA, administered through the Healthcare Labour Adjustment Program, was set up to protect workers from the changes that New Directions will make in the labour pool. Displaced workers will be offered early retirement, retraining, job sharing, or a comparable job in their health region. The ESA covers most of the employees of the three health care unions—the BCNU, the Health Sciences Association [HSA], and the Hospital Employees Union [HEU].

Sylvia Stoufi, of the Healthcare Labour Adjustment Program (HLAP) says they expect that the ESA will be "extended to most people, but that the program has not yet determined "how that kind of work (existing community care) will fit in."

She says the challenge the HLAP faces in the transition from acute care to community care is implementing the comparable job

Colleen Fuller, of the Health Sciences Association (HSA), agrees that the "wage gap between the acute care and community care sectors is enormous" and says she is concerned that in the provincial government's move from hospital-based to community-based health care, there will be "no parallel effort to ensure [that nurses in both] jobs will be paid the same."

But Fuller is also concerned that the amount of money the Provincial government is giving to communities is not enough to cover services, much less guarantee wage parity. Fuller says all three health care unions support the principles behind New Directions, but warns that the government is "not putting in the precautions to make sure that these changes are not simply a *de facto* cut in services and a *de facto* transfer to the private sector."

The situation the community nurses are in is part of a larger problem that all British Columbians will face if BC's New Directions in Health Care is allowed to be merely a cost-cutting tool, rather than a method of making the health care system more effective and accessible.

HSA's Fuller points out that the provincial government is dealing with billions of dollars in transfer payment cuts by the federal government by restructuring the provincial health care system.

photo by Fatima Jaffer

WHAT'S NEWS

by wendy lee kenward

BC adoption review

The BC government's review of adoption policies will apparently be complete as *Kinesis* goes to press, when the Adoption Review Committee submits its final report to the Ministry of Social Services.

The committee, which consists of MLA Margaret Lord, Elizabeth Hall of United Nations (UNN), and lawyer Larry Gilbert, was set up in February to review and gather feedback for the policy review.

BC's current adoption policy has not been updated since 1957. Women's, people of colour and First Nations communities have been calling for revisions for many years now.

Issues expected to be covered in the review committee's report include: open and closed adoptions; the rights of children and parents; confidentiality and access to information/records; private adoptions; international adoptions; equity issues such as age and marital status; and adoption of Aboriginal children.

Open and closed adoptions are a major issue in this policy review. Mary Leblanc, a mother of three adopted children, all of which are open adoptions, says that "with openness like we have, we can address the issues of sensitivity to the birth moms." Leblanc adds that not all adoptions are as open as theirs, and that "we [had to] check out the situation first".

Twenty years ago, closed adoptions "used to be the norm—you knew you were adopted and that was it," says Karen Shepstone, who is waiting to adopt a child. There has been a shift towards open adoptions which, says Shepstone, allows children to know their roots.

Services appear to be an important factor in this policy review—services for children and parents, in Native communities, and in extended families. Hall of the UNN says, families and communities need opportunities to heal and grow and "support services essentially are not there because existing services are based on white values where we don't fit in—they should rather provide us with support of existing native services."

Commenting on the division of the issues into little "packages," such as open and closed, international, and so on, Elizabeth Hall states, "if we are going to address issues, we can't do it in a piecemeal fashion."

Before we talk about adoption, let's talk about prevention and support for parents in crisis, adds Hall. "With prevention and support when parents are in crisis, there would be need for adoption in some cases," adds Hall.

Even though there was consultation with Native communities, [the committee did] not have enough time to make many contacts, says Hall.

wendy lee kenward is an early childhood educator in Vancouver

by Robyn Hall

FMS symposium at SFU

A recent symposium held in Vancouver on repressed memories of child sexual abuse has left many of the women who attended feeling shortchanged.

The symposium, "Memories of Sexual Abuse: Scientific Clinical and Legal Issues," was sponsored by the Psychology Department at Simon Fraser University and held in May. It was advertised as a forum where leading experts on both sides of the "false memory syndrome" (FMS) debate would present evidence for public scrutiny. FMS is a concept, spearheaded by mostly men who have been charged with child sexual abuse, that maintains that feminist therapists implant memories of child sexual abuse in their clients, most of whom are women.

Many women went to the conference, some skeptical, but most hoping for fair debate and the presentation of useful research. As Robin Rennie, a Vancouver therapist said, "If we don't engage [in] the debate, it goes on without us."

Strong supporters of FMS also attended. The first day of the conference did not come close to meeting the expectations of women hoping for useful information. Ten people, nine men and one woman, spoke on various panels about the unreliability of memory. Linda Williams, a US child abuse researcher, was the only person to support the fact that traumatic childhood memories are often repressed. She was also the only speaker who was formally rebutted.

Silva Tenenbeim, an SFU grad student in Communications, called the sessions, "an

opportunity for self-indulgent grandstanding" by male academics.

The presenters, most of whom had PhDs in psychology, "started from the supposition that recovered memory and ritual abuse have no validity," says Naomi Ehren-Lis, an advocate for survivors. For example, ritual abuse was compared to UFO abduction and past-life regression by one academic from Carleton.

Day two was a marginal improvement. A panel of therapists, including two women, Maureen McEvoy and Pat Fisher, who identified themselves as feminists, spoke about their work and responded to the events of the previous day. McEvoy repeatedly urged people to remember that each speaker comes out of a particular paradigm, and to identify their biases when they talk.

The symposium ended with a public forum where US child abuse researcher Williams and Elizabeth Loftus, an academic and member of the FMS Foundation Board, spoke for an hour each. Any fears about the persuasiveness of Loftus' argument for FMS were put to rest when she showed a picture of the mother of TV entertainer Roseanne Arnold on the slide projector. Roseanne has identified herself as a survivor of child sexual abuse, but her mother has told Loftus "it's just not true."

Williams, meanwhile, commented that she was the only child abuse researcher invited to present at the symposium.

Most of the post-debate questions were addressed to Loftus regarding her involvement in the False Memory Syndrome Foundation. One woman, a graduate student in psychiatry, was made to sit down when she repeatedly tried to get Loftus to answer one of her questions.

In the end though, some of those who attended felt that, "The debate gave some

people a chance to speak out and was a good way of letting a few more people know what's going on," according to Vancouver therapist Rennie.

Some women say they believe a lot of the people who had attended the symposium to find out which side of the debate they should be on now oppose FMS.

The conference brought up some important issues. There is a need for research around traumatic memory that could be useful to therapists and survivors. There are huge gaps between legal, therapeutic and feminist approaches to child sexual assault. Finally, it did expose the biased viewpoints on memories of sexual abuse presented as scientific fact by many academics.

"We need to take more seriously that people who are in positions of influence don't believe survivors. It is a really big concern—whatever is behind this push is doing quite well right now," according to Ehren-Lis.

Is this enough, though, considering that SFU's department of psychology graduate student budget was used for this very in-house production put together on short notice? For one, women doing graduate work at SFU on psychiatric discourse and FMS did not get to present papers. And ironically, there wasn't much attention paid to memories of child abuse itself—the experience of child sexual abuse and how it feels to forget and to remember.

SFU graduate student Tenenbeim argues that this is just a small part of the backlash against feminism in psychiatry and psychology. Ultimately, for many of the women I talked with, the symposium was merely the cause of a massive headache.

Robyn Hall is a volunteer writer for *Kinesis*.

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ALLOW 2-3 WEEKS

WHAT'S NEWS

by Shannon e. Ash

Greening Our Cities

"We have come together to share our visions and to discuss actions and strategies we can take to promote a green Vancouver region which is ecologically sustainable and socially just."

This is part of the declaration from the Greening Our Cities Conference which took place in Vancouver in May. Linking social justice and environmental issues was a primary concern of this conference, which focussed on BC's Lower Mainland and Fraser Valley—although the information discussed would be useful for urban areas elsewhere.

The conference was attended by about 250 people, most of whom are involved in local environmental issues and community development. Many women were involved, as organizers, speakers, and participants. Among the speakers were Rose Pointe of the Musqueam First Nation, Mae Burrows of the United Fishermen and Allied Workers Union, Linda Marcotte of End Legislated Poverty, and Libby Davies, a former Vancouver city councillor. [Excerpts from these and other women's presentations will be published in the September issue of *Kinesis*].

Some issues brought forward by the women include: fish habitat, loss of farmland, sewage treatment, the Kemoano completion project, a massive water diversion project in BC, community decision-making, communal living, and the proposed waterfront development and casino in Vancouver.

Heather Pritchard of the Community Alternatives Society, a housing co-op whose members live cooperatively and run an organic farm, commented, "I feel somehow, after being so much on the fringe...this voice is

being heard a little out there...the mainstream is paying some attention, and we have some history we can share."

The first day of the conference focussed on current issues in the Vancouver region, such as transportation, land use, and development. Some current green city projects in Vancouver, such as housing cooperatives and community gardens, were discussed, and some of Vancouver's ecological history was presented. Did you know that Vancouver once had at least 27 active salmon streams?

The second day was concerned with action. Participants learned of actions and strategizing in other urban areas such as Berkeley, California, and Winnipeg. They then formed small groups to discuss specific issues and plan action to achieve their visions.

Nancy Skinner of Berkeley Citizens Action emphasized the importance of grassroots action: "No government is ever going to give you democracy...it's an oxymoron, it's anti-theft, even if it's a democratic government, because just like a bureaucracy, when we get there, we exist to self-perpetuate. Only the people are going to...demand or achieve democracy acted. [Progressive social change] happens from the bottom up."

Some of the projects that came out of the conference include: a Food and the City project to set up a demonstration garden at Hastings Park (site of the PNE); a group to support First Nations land claims, tentatively called Friends of the Treaty Process; and an Eco-City Network, which aims to link diverse groups and communities working on issues of ecological sustainability, social justice, and community empowerment. The Network's first meeting takes place as *Kinesis* goes to press.

In her presentation, former councillor Davies said, "I have long dreamed of the idea in Vancouver, that somehow we could bring together the environmental movement, the tenants' movement, the women's movement, the peace movement, the anti-poverty movement, and...form a very pow-

erful base in this city. I am hoping this conference will be the very first step in doing that."

by Erin Mullan

Privacy in sexual assault cases

Women's groups are pressing the federal government to come up with new rape-shield protection to stop defence lawyers from probing the psychological history of sexual assault victims.

Under current Canadian law, assault victims have some protection against being questioned about their sexual history. However, there are no safeguards to stop lawyers for accused rapists from probing the victim's psychological history in court. Defence attorneys are also subpoenaing the complainant's psychological records, including counselling records from rape crisis centres.

Crown lawyer Susan Chapman, who chairs an Ontario government committee looking at the problem, says the new tactic is in many ways a repackaging of the sexual past of the complainant.

"This is one of the big hits right now. 'You were sexually abused as a child and now you're confused who the abuser is.' Or, 'you've suffered the trauma of abuse before, therefore you're unreliable, you've got psychological problems,'" says Chapman.

Last month, 60 women's organizations met with federal justice minister Allan Rock to pressure him to act to prevent defence lawyers from trawling through the emotional histories of women and children who have been sexually assaulted.

by Sue Vohanka

Taxing child support payments

A recent Supreme Court decision to suspend a landmark ruling by a lower court means women are still required to pay income tax on child support payments.

Although the federal court of appeal ruled in early May that taxing the payments was discriminatory, Canada's highest court iced the decision June 14 by granting the federal government's request to suspend the decision until the Supreme Court of Canada makes a final ruling.

Under the existing system, women pay about \$300 million a year in taxes on child

support payments, while men get tax breaks adding up to \$660 million [see *Kinesis*, June 1994].

A North Vancouver woman who's been fighting the tax for years says the recent legal manoeuvring is preventing her from having her day in court.

"It was very disappointing," says Brenda Schaff. "I think they should change the name of the ministry of justice to the ministry of injustice."

Just before Schaff's income tax appeal was set to be heard by the federal appeal court May 30, the government obtained an indefinite adjournment of her case. Schaff's lawyer wasn't even told about the court-ordered adjournment until after it was granted.

Then, the June 14 Supreme Court decision adjourned Schaff's case and three similar cases until an earlier case won by Suzanne Thibodeau is settled. The federal government is appealing the Thibodeau decision, which is expected to go before the top court in October.

Schaff says the issues in her case go beyond the question decided in the Thibodeau case. While both cases dispute the constitutionality of taxing child support payments, Schaff's case makes arguments - that poor single mothers and their children have constitutional rights under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms - that have never been considered by the courts.

"When it gets to Supreme Court in October, they're saying they're not going to have anything about the poverty issues in there," Schaff told *Kinesis*.

"It's been a real education in politics for me. The last few months has just been unbelievable, the things they've pulled to try and stop my case," she added.

An Ontario-based group, Support and Custody Orders for Priority Enforcement (SCOPE), argued against suspending the federal court ruling.

SCOPE says mothers receiving child support should file notices of objection with Revenue Canada, so they can get a refund on taxes if the federal court ruling is eventually upheld in Supreme Court.

A federal government committee is travelling across the country hearing submissions on the tax issue. Schaff attended the committee's hearing in Vancouver in late June.

A lot of single mothers attended, she said, and told some "really sad stories" about the unfair tax rules and their effect on women's lives.

The committee members talked about the poverty issues and little else, Schaff added. Her response: "If you're so concerned about the poverty issue, why are you stopping my case?"

Sue Vohanka is a freelance writer living in Vancouver.

CHRONIQUE FEMINISTE N° 52 LE TRAVAIL DE NUIT DES FEMMES

Ce numéro de la Chronique dénonce les méfaits du travail de nuit sur la santé, la vie familiale, sociale et culturelle de tous les travailleurs. Mais il montre surtout que le travail de nuit est encore plus insupportable pour les femmes parce qu'elles occupent les emplois les plus stressants et les plus répétitifs, ceux qui se supportent encore moins bien la nuit et parce qu'elles assument pratiquement seules les charges familiales.

Ces articles rappellent que la polémique autour du travail de nuit des femmes a déjà fait couler beaucoup d'encre, d'autres décrivent et critiquent la législation actuelle. Un tableau explicatif aide à se retrouver dans les méandres des lois et conventions. Suivent des témoignages de femmes qui travaillent la nuit et la critique de livres sur le sujet.

Ce dossier montre combien il est difficile de choisir entre le maintien ou la suppression du travail de nuit des femmes. En effet, le danger de l'interdire est aussi grand que celui de l'autoriser.

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by Elizabeth Kendall

New equality litigation fund

The BC Litigation Fund has been launched to finance test cases and court incentives to further women's equality in BC. Initiated by West Coast LEAF (Women's Legal Education and Action Fund), the BC Litigation Fund has already raised almost 30 per cent of its \$100,000 goal from the Lower Mainland legal community.

Equality test cases and Charter of Rights challenges have helped to advance equality over the last eight years, but they are expensive. The federal court challenges program, which helped finance such cases, was cancelled by the Conservative government in 1992, making the creation of the BC Litigation Fund more important. The Fund can make more of these cases possible.

To make a donation, contact LEAF at (604) 684-8772, or fax (604) 684-1543.

IVC develops resource library

InVisible Colours Film and Video Society is now producing workshops, and presenting screenings of films and videos by Women of Colour and First Nations Women. IVC's goals are to continue support work and to develop a library which will be accessible to various organizations and artists in the community.

IVC is requesting the help of women in the form of donations of any books, magazines, videos, and articles relating to the following areas: First Nations Women and Women of Colour filmmakers (locally and internationally); sociological, political and cross-cultural information; information on various ethnic groups; women's health issues; women and the media; third world countries and development; and producing, marketing and financing film and video projects.

If you wish to donate to IVC, contact Claire Thomas, InVisible Colours Film & Video Society, 115-119 West Pender Street, Vancouver, BC, V6B 1S5; or call or fax (604) 682-1116.

Federal taxation task group

Following the recent court decision on Suzanne Thibaudaud's challenge of the sexist federal tax on child support payments, a Federal Women's Task Group has been formed to conduct a nationwide consultation with women about the tax treatment of child support. Sheila Finestone, Secretary of State for the Status of Women is chairing the Task Group. Other members are: David Walker, parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Finance, and Georgette Sheridan, a member of the standing committee on Justice and Legal Affairs.

The Task Group is particularly focusing on submissions from custodial and non-custodial parents, child advocates, women's organizations, lawyers, accountants, and

community groups. Roundtable discussions have already been held in Saskatchewan, Quebec, BC, and Manitoba. There will be public forums in New Brunswick and Ontario in July. The Task Group is also soliciting written submissions but the deadline had already passed, by the time *Kinesis* received word about the "consultation."

However, for more information, write to: the Task Group on the Tax Treatment of Child Support, 340 Laurier Avenue, West, Station D, Post Office Box 2010, Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 5W3.

First Nations healing centre

The Professional Native Women's Association (PNWA) has been working for months to establish a 24hr crisis/counseling and referral line for First Nations women as well as a First Nation's Healing Centre.

They have been denied funding for these projects and are requesting support from various progressive communities in the form of letters of support for their new projects.

Write to: 1st Nations Wellness Council, 206-33 East Broadway, Vancouver, BC, V5T 1V4, or fax at (604) 874-5235, or at (604) 872-1845, attention: Gloria Nicolson of the Professional Native Women's Association.

Reproductive technologies booklet

Inter Pares and Women's Health International (WHI) are working on a variety of activities for the United Nations International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) to be held in September, 1994 in Cairo.

The coalition's work includes planning an educational kit, and producing discussion papers on various aspects of the population issue, as well as a booklet on women's experiences with population control programs and the technologies used in these programs.

Inter Pares and WHI are on a drive to collect, in whatever form possible (written, tape-recorded, drawings), a range of women's stories about their experiences with contraceptives or fertility drugs and technologies. Their intention is to collect women's experiences from a range of places—Asia, Africa, Central and South America, and Canada—information on population control programs, and fact sheets on the effects of the drugs, devices and technologies themselves. The coalition intends to share this booklet with as many women as possible. The booklet will serve as a tool for community organizing and policy change.

Women's stories can help Inter Pares and WHI to validate women's experiences, "especially concerning the choices we have and who controls these 'choices'." Also, women can recognize how drugs and devices to control our fertility impact on us differently according to race, class and country of origin. "We can learn from the experiences of others, gain insights about how to struggle for reproductive freedom, and become empowered to act together."

If you are interested in participating, contact Inter Pares at 58 Arthur Street, Ottawa, Ontario, K1R 7B9, or call (613) 563-4801, or fax at (613) 594-4704.

Documenting Clayoquot Sound

Two women arrested at the Clayoquot Sound blockade and protest last year have received funding to produce a video documentary dealing with women and political resistance. The project is called *Fury For the Sound: The Women at Clayoquot Sound*.

The two women, Hilary Mackey and Shelley Wine, were arrested last summer on the logging road leading into Clayoquot Sound.

The grant was made available through the Explorations Program for emerging artists. For this first time video production team, the making of the video has been an integral part of their participation in the Clayoquot movement. "We were arrested on July 21st, the day of the Women and Children's Blockade," says co-producer, Shelley Wine. "We were so moved by the conviction of the women who surrounded us that we wanted to explore how women of varied ages and backgrounds become politically active in these supposedly apathetic times."

Over 50 hours of footage has been collected. A completion date for *Fury for the Sound* is set for February 1995. For more information, contact Hilary Mackey or Shelly Wine at (604) 879-9212.

Women's Work's 10th anniversary

Women's Work Screen Print and Design Studio will be 10 years old in October. The print and design studio has been more than just a business—their mandate is to enable individual empowerment in the workplace and wide-spread community change. Women's Work is known in BC for its support to community groups by donations and discounts.

Women's Work produces high quality custom design and screen printing on shirts, canvas bags, aprons and towels. Besides custom design, as well as providing women with on-the-job-training and employment in a non-traditional trade. As well, the print shop strives to be environmentally-conscious with the use of earth-friendly products and processes.

The business began as a collective of five women in April 1984 with the objective to do custom design work and screen printing to service and benefit the community of women and children. The group hoped to provide an economic base for LAEMPAC (the Lesbian and Feminist Mothers Political Action Group which is no longer in existence.) By 1986, Women's Work became the partnership of Lori Wall and Carol Weaver as collective members went on to other things.

Among groups and events that have received donations from Women's Work are: Everywoman's Health Centre (EHC), Women Against Violence Against Women (WAVAW), The Vancouver Status of Women (VSW), Wendilo WEST, Vancouver Rape Relief and Women's Shelter, and Women to Women Global Strategies.

A commemorative Women's Work shirt is available now at various women positive events and venues in Vancouver. For more information, call Women's Work at (604) 980-4235.

Broadcasting now — Radio Nadezhda

Every day on the air and reaching audiences across the entire Confederation of Independent States (the former Soviet Union), Radio Nadezhda is said to be the largest women's radio station in the world, with more than 1.5 million listeners in Moscow alone. One of the founders of Nadezhda is the Women's Union of Russia, which was established from the former communist women's league. Prior to the Russian elections in December 1993, the station became an important mouthpiece for the Russian Women's Party. Nevertheless, "we are an independent radio station," says editor in chief Tatyana Zeleranskaya. "Every woman's organisation can apply to us."

The programs of Nadezhda are a mixture of entertainment and information,

"geared to the needs of the average Russian woman." Topics range from how to start your own business, childcare, and health, to how to write a resume. Nadezhda's hotline offers advice on relations and sexual problems, and tends to be the most popular program.

While censorship is not an issue with this broadcasting program, technical equipment is. "Transmission equipment," says Zeleranskaya, "is rare in Russia and the transmitting stations are controlled by one company that drives prices up." Last Spring, Zeleranskaya visited the Netherlands to get financial and technical assistance for Nadezhda. With the support of a Dutch broadcasting station, Nadezhda is going to train technical staff, in order to become less dependent on the technical production companies.

Since 1993 Independent Media, the Dutch publisher of the *Moscow Times* has become the biggest Nadezhda shareholder. A reorganisation has been started, aimed to make Nadezhda financially independent within one year. Nadezhda staff are presently visiting other countries to attract Russian and foreign advertisers.

For information, contact Radio Nadezhda, 25 Pyatnitskaya, 113326 Moscow, Russia, or call 095-233-65-88, or fax 2302828.

Studio D is twenty!

Studio D is commemorating 20 years of groundbreaking feminist documentaries. According to executive producer Ginny Stikeman, Studio D's 20th anniversary is an opportunity to acknowledge and honour the many women who have worked with the studio over the years.

Founded by Kathleen Shannon in 1974 as a forum for women filmmakers, Studio D has produced more than 100 films and won over 75 international awards, including a Genie and two Academy awards. An average of nine films are in various stages of production each year, with three to four new films being launched annually.

Through the New Initiatives in Film (NIF) program, a number of films will be produced by intermingling filmmakers. The NIF program, created by the studio, began its first official year in 1991, providing professional development opportunities for Aboriginal women and Women of Colour through apprenticeships, hands-on workshops and a resource bank directory.

Studio D's new and upcoming releases this year include *When Women Kill*, a co-production with Morag Productions of Montreal, that looks at the circumstances that drive battered women to kill their abusive male partners; *Motherland: Tales of Wonder*, a feature-length documentary about women's experience of mothering over the last 30 years; *Keepers of the Fire*, which records the resistance of Aboriginal women throughout history to the assaults on their cultures and peoples; and *Hands of History*, which re-examines conventional assumptions about Aboriginal art.

To mark its 20th year, Studio D has adopted the slogan "D is for Dare. Dare to be different, to speak out, to be feminist, to be 'out', to fight back..."

"We have to dare as we have in the past," says Stikeman. "Our films dare to be different by challenging the way in which women's lives are depicted by the mainstream media. Our goal is to make films that encourage discussion and dialogue among women, and that promote action aimed at improving the status of women in society."

For more information, contact Kimberley Cooper, PO Box 6100, Station Centre-Ville, Montreal, Quebec, H3C 3H5; or call (514) 283-9411, or fax (514) 496-2573.

Sources include: Women's Exchange Program (WEP) *International Newsbulletin*, and press releases.

FEATURE

Canadian social policy review or...

...a cheap-labour strategy

by Jean Swanson

The report on the OECD made it all come clear to me. There it was on the front page of the *Globe and Mail*, "OECD can't solve jobless puzzle, Member countries urged to trim labour, social regulations." According to the report from the OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development), with 25 member nations including Canada, "a high minimum wage, strict working hours and rigid job classifications" discourage job creation. Governments, said the report, should "trim social benefits that either burden employers too heavily or are so generous that they sap the motivation to find new work."

The "social policy review" is ...the Canadian part of a 25-nation strategy to promote cheap labour in rich countries.

That sounds exactly like what the Liberals are doing, I thought, complete with the disgusting rhetoric that blames the unemployed for unemployment.

Then, two days later, there was our minister of Human Resources, Lloyd Axworthy saying that Canada is already following some of these OECD policies and hinting that we might see more of them when the government's action plan appears, maybe in mid-July.

The Liberal "social policy review" isn't an objective academic exercise to improve social programs. It's the Canadian part of a 25-nation strategy to promote cheap labour in rich countries.

When I think of cheap labour I think of two scenes. One is a Maquila I visited in Reynosa, Mexico three years ago. A little village in the middle of a swamp that flooded daily in the rainy season was home to a hundred or so families of workers in the Maquila zone of this border town. The group I was with talked with a woman who lived there with her three children. They all lived in shacks with outhouses and no running water. They earned about \$5 a day, when prices I have seen for myself in the stores were not that much cheaper than here. Produce seemed about the same, a little cheaper. Tuna was 69 cents a can. When it rained, the whole area, including the outhouses, flooded. I had just been told that most children in Mexico who died, died of diarrhea. I could imagine it would be a full time job for a woman looking after kids in the area just to try to keep the kids from getting sick, let alone have to work full time in a factory for \$5 a day.

The other scene is my brother's family. They live in the United States where my brother has a low wage job driving a bus for children with disabilities. His income is so low that the family gets food stamps and firewood from a US program to provide heat for families with children under five. I suspect the program exists because the US is embarrassed by its infant mortality rate, the highest in the industrial world.

Both scenes drive home one point: Low wages mean poverty. And poverty, whether

in Mexico, the US or Canada means that people get sick more and die sooner. And who is it that earns 65 percent of what men earn? Women. We're the ones who get stuck with most of the low wage jobs, even though we're the ones who usually have the kids to support. A cheap labour strategy will hurt women even more than men.

Already in Britain, Margaret Thatcher's policies have devastated social programs and helped reduce wages. Predictably, poverty is growing to such an extent that life expectancies in poor areas have now started to shrink. Commenting on a recent study showing that death rates in poor areas of Britain are four times higher than in rich areas, Dr. Richard Wilkinson, writing in the *British Medical Journal*, warned, "It risks as great as [the risks of poverty] resulted from exposure to toxic

done by cutting benefits to so-called "underserving" people like childless women and men on welfare and seasonal workers who collect UI. People could be forced to take training or do community work to collect benefits (this is already happening for ex-fishers). Single mothers could be forced by the necessity of low benefits by law to seek low wage work. Just recently the Yukon government changed their regulations to require single mothers on welfare to seek work when their youngest child reaches the ripe old age of two (reduced from six).

Programs like welfare and UI could be transformed to wage subsidies for employable people, including single parents, to lure (or force) them into low-wage work. These people would compete with other workers who don't get subsidies. Hope-

•Subsidies create the incentive for more people to enter the labour market when we don't have enough jobs for the people who are there now. This creates more competition for scarce jobs and pushes wages down.

•People who have subsidies will be able to accept jobs that pay lower wages than people who don't have subsidies. This will depress wages and make working people who don't have subsidies poorer.

•Low income people who don't get subsidies will become angry because they have to compete with people who do get help. This creates conflict among workers who need to unite and struggle for better conditions. This is already happening with the federal benefit program for ex-fishers in Atlantic Canada.

•Wage subsidies give employers more power at a time when low wage workers are the ones who desperately need their share of power.

•Instead of wage subsidies, minimum wage should be increased. This wouldn't cost taxpayers a cent, and would help create the spending power we need to boost our economy.

For months, I've been talking and writing about "social policy reform". I now think that we shouldn't use that term. "Social policy reform" implies that improvements will be made to the system. "Social policy" is so objective and academic. The words help us forget that lives depend on the programs we're talking about.

While we've been talking about "social policy reform", we've thought that we



materials, then offices would be closed and populations evacuated from contaminated areas."

Whatever changes the Liberals are likely to make to promote this cheap labour (he'll call it social policy), we have some basis to predict what will be in it. Provincial experiments with social programs, Axworthy's own comments about UI and welfare and people who use them, and various leaked documents reported mostly in the *Globe and Mail*, add up to the following ingredients for a cheap labour strategy in Canada:

•The million and a half jobs that need to be created, won't be. This ensures that more people are seeking jobs that can get them, maintains power in employers' hands, and keeps wages low.

•Some money will be taken out of the "social policy envelope" and used, ostensibly, for deficit reduction. No new money will come into social programs from taxing wealthy Canadians or corporations who could afford to pay more.

•Existing social programs and UI will be rearranged to force or lure more low income people into the labour force, even though there aren't enough jobs for the people who are there already. The OECD, using Orwellian newspeak, says this will lead to "wage moderation" by helping "outsiders" to compete for jobs. This will be

fully they'll get mad at the government which created the inequity, not each other.

Details of the government's plan for cheap labour are also emerging from experimental provincial benefit schemes, encouraged by Axworthy. Most of these involve blaming the poor for their poverty, and trying to change them with counselling or training. Some programs provide subsidies to employers who hire people on welfare or for low wage workers themselves. In BC and New Brunswick, for example, the Self Sufficiency Project subsidizes single parents on welfare who find one full time or two part time low wage jobs. But the subsidy only lasts for three years. After that the woman has to find a higher paying job or go back on welfare. The subsidies help employers get workers when they pay low wages. Other provinces like Alberta make people desperate to seek low wage work by cutting benefits and humiliating people who can't find work.

Wage subsidies are seductive because they appear to help out workers who desperately need help. But the OECD and corporate lobby groups promote them as an alternative to increasing minimum wage. This means part of the wages that employers used to pay will be paid by taxpayers! Some of the problems with wage subsidies include:

Whatever changes the Liberals are likely to make to promote this cheap labour...we have some basis to predict what will be in it.

were talking about a Canadian, not an international process. But the OECD report helps us see that there is international as well as corporate pressure to reduce wages and benefits. So-called social reform in Canada could put us squarely into what Linda McQuaig called the "race to the bottom" with poorer countries in the South. A first step in the struggle for policies that will promote equality of wealth and power is to name what we are fighting - and name it clearly. We are not participating in an objective social policy reform process. We are fighting a cheap labour strategy that will impoverish millions of people - unless we stop it.

Jean Swanson is an anti-poverty activist and works with End Legislated Poverty in Vancouver.

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FEATURE

Campbell River, BC Mining Strike:

Women picket the mines

by Denise Nadeau

On June 3, two hundred women and their families gathered to support the lock-out of Westmin miners in Campbell River, British Columbia.

The Women's March and rally was organized by the Women's Auxiliary of CAW (Canadian Auto Workers) 3419. This event marked a shift in the role of the Women's Auxiliary in the 14 month-long dispute between Westmin Resources and the miners who work at the Myra Falls copper-zinc mine in Strathcona Park.

The Women's Auxiliary was created last summer when Jan McMaster decided to start a food drive to help the families of the 350 miners who had been locked out by Westmin Resources since April 24 last year. As the dispute lengthened, the food drive became the Miners Food Bank.

After almost a year of stalemate, the provincial government appointed a mediator, Brian Foley, to step in. With the union refusing to take concessions and the company insisting on rolling back many of the gains made in seniority, wages, job security, seniority, allowances and safety language, mediation failed. In May this year Brian Foley recommended a neutral mediator-arbitrator and a process of binding arbitration to end the dispute. The union agreed. Westmin refused. The provincial government is not intervening. (The present labour code has no mechanism to deal with employers who have no desire to negotiate.) Westmin then ended the lockout to lure workers back. On June 10, the miners voted unanimously to go on strike. Now Westmin is engaged in a press campaign, putting full page ads in Vancouver and community newspapers to undermine community support for the miners.

In the past few weeks, the Women's Auxiliary has changed its role. Besides organizing the women's march on June 3, it has started a bi-weekly community newsletter called Caring for Workers (CAW) to counteract Westmin's press. The women have set up their own picket line and picket committee, have organized a petition campaign and are planning a one year anniversary bash for the Food Bank on July 23.

Denise Nadeau of Comox valley Women to Women Global Strategies interviewed Jan McMaster and Louise Jones about the shift in the group's profile.

Denise Nadeau: You recently spoke at the Campbell River and Courtenay district labour council about the women getting involved in different ways. Do you want to say anything about this shift and how you see the role of women in this struggle?

Jan McMaster: We have been silent too long. Now that's its been going on so long—next week it will be 14 months since our men have been out—and, personally, I felt it was time to not be discrete anymore about where we stand. It was time to come out in public. We have decided to be on the picket lines and to get this newspaper (Caring for Workers) started so we can get our opinions heard by the public because too much of it is biased toward Westmin and nothing is being heard about our side.

I stress at our meetings that, when we are involved in anything to do with the public, what [women] say and how we act, reflects our union, so we must at all times have character, and in character we have strength. We have done really well with the men, they have not been put in jail or [participated in] any violence and the women have been very good with that too.

Louise Jones: I think it's time for us to be on the front lines. I really do. We have to be

more vocal. We have to start writing more letters to editors. We have to make more noise. I believe women have a power when we choose to use it: we have it in every area, like in purchasing [where] we can force the companies to take things out of, or add them to products by not buying them. We have this incredible power. I don't believe a lot of women are aware of it. If the women could unite, if you could get the women fired up, we'd have power. We can use it to find out where Bronfman is (74 percent of Westmin is owned by Edgar Bronfman's Branscan Ltd). It would be interesting to find out just where their little tentacles go and boycott those products, you know. We have that power and it frustrates me sometimes that women aren't aware of it.

Nadeau: What do you hope will come out of the women organizing?

McMaster: My hope is that the rest of Canada will see that this struggle is not only for Campbell River and not only for miner's

McMaster: I say to every woman, don't be afraid of Westmin, or any organization or company. Fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your men and your homes. Every woman has a talent. Use it. Get involved. This is not just our men's fight but its the wives' because we have to plan the menu, we have to have a budget. Now we have nothing to budget with, but we're still trying to budget. So what we do here and what we accomplish is not only going to be for ourselves but for our grandchildren, our sons, our daughters and the future. We can't let a company like Westmin intimidate us and threaten us by a lockout, or a strike or a rollback on their wages. We have to fight and we will keep on fighting until we win.

Jones: Jan and I were talking through the day, and we're both learning through this, we're getting a lot of experience. I would like to see other unions like at the mill, the wives have their auxiliary and city workers, some of whom are women and they're part of that

wife, he will not go back to work like a dog. When my husband goes back to work, he's going to go with dignity and a fair contract. He will not roll over and play dead for scraps from Westmin's table, for example, if they lose the things they fought for, like the senior issue—I mean this has nothing to do with wages, the wages aren't the issue. The men know they're well paid. It's the contract language, it's the things you can't put a value on that Westmin wants to take away. There isn't a company in Canada with unionized workers who isn't watching this.

(CAW Local 3419 is taking a 'no concessions' stand, especially on the issue of job security, at a time when labour throughout North America is discovering that bargaining away concessions does not protect the worker from either further concessions or from companies pulling out.

To support these women urge the Premier to legislate a process to end the dispute and contact the Women's Auxiliary CAW 3419, PO Box 98, Campbell River BC V9W 4Z9, or phone Louise Jones at 337-8645, Jan McMaster 287-

**"If the women could unite,
if we could get women fired up,
we'd have power."**

wives but for everyone. Everyone should become involved, and if they get involved and start speaking out and doing things, other people are going to listen.

Since I've become involved in this CAW, I have met more women and more men that have the same cause in mind and it's encouraging. I'm a Native woman and my people, which are the Okanagan, are not militant. You never see them on picket lines or blockades and here I am involved in this. I always try to tell the women that, with character, we can win the fight. We are going to win.

Jones: I hope that we'll have some influence on the settlement. And I really hope that when this is over, the women don't disband. [I hope that] whatever group is formed, they will remain a group and they will continue to meet and to take interest in their husbands' lives at work not to listen to their husbands come home and bitch about stupid stuff but [to] actually know what the contract is about, what the dispute's about. [If they don't know] it's because they've got kids and they've got their own jobs to do.

Nadeau: What kind of support do you want from other women?

union, but there are a lot of men there and their wives should be part of that. It will make all of the unions stronger. I would love to see our auxiliary take what it's learned to the wives of those men, and say, here's what we've learned so far, let us share with you what little experience we've learnt. Then they'll learn more and share it with us.

And it would be good for the women who have been through the hard strikes of the past with their kids to go and talk to the younger wives of the members now and say, "look, I was through this in 1971 or 1968 or whatever, and this is how we did it." They have so much to give and so much to share.

If people would write individually to their local MLAs and especially Premier Harcourt and say, "its time to stop and force Westmin to the table, either get your butt in there and take the arbitration, or get out of the park completely and let someone in there who's going to do the job."

McMaster: Women should also send us support letters or articles for our newsletter.

Nadeau: Any final comments?

Jones: I'd love to see my husband go back to work tomorrow. But as long as I'm his

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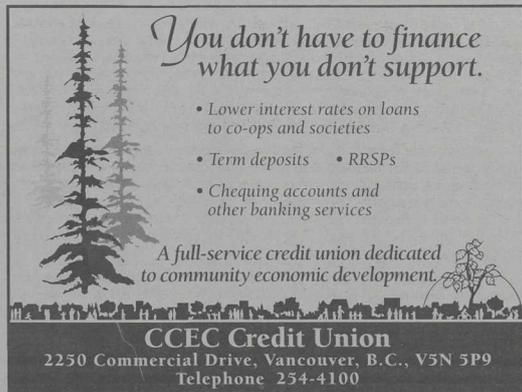
The Women's Employment and Training Coalition (WETC) received funds to participate in the Social Security Review.

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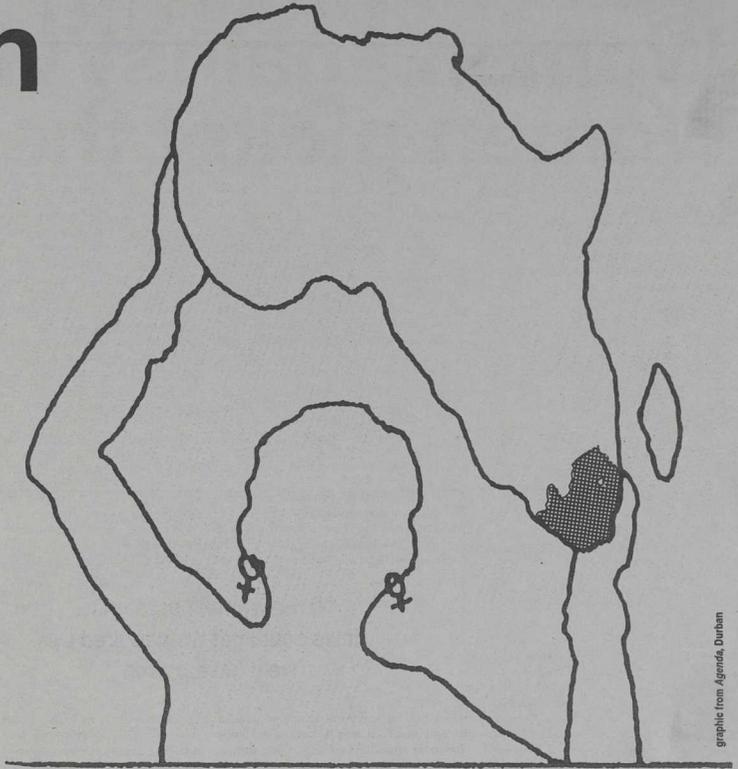
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Women in South Africa Part 2



graphic from Agnès de Durban

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All photographs are by Fatima Jaffer, with the exception page 15, which comes to us courtesy Maganathrie Pillay

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border graphic courtesy of *Sister Namibia*; adapted by Sur Mehat

The first "free" elections in South Africa took place in April this year, after almost 400 years of struggle against white colonization. *Kinesis* celebrates the victory of the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa and abroad with part two of our special supplement.

In the last 50 years, colonization in South Africa took the form of apartheid, which means "separate development" in Afrikaans, which relied on race classifications as the basis for its attempt to "divide and rule" the land and its people. Anti-apartheid liberation movements subverted and defeated apartheid by forging alliances across race lines, and among peoples of colour in South Africa in the form of united black movements of resistance.

For our South Africa coverage, *Kinesis* uses the term (upper case B) "Black" to denote people of African origin, and the term (lower case b) "black" when referring to all peoples of colour. In the South African context, the term "Indian" is used to denote people of South Asian origin. The term "coloured" is used to denote people of mixed-race heritage.

According to the latest estimates, there are more than 32 million people in South Africa. Seventy-five percent are Black; 14 percent are white; eight percent are of mixed race heritage; and three percent are East and South Asian.

In the last supplement [see *Kinesis*, Jun. 94], we presented a chronology of the history of colonization of South Africa, and the struggle leading up to the recent elections in South Africa. We also ran interviews with Brigitte Mabandla of the African National Congress, Lydia Kompe of the Rural Women's Movement, and an interview with Fatima Jaffer, who was in South Africa during the elections. So Jaffer was representing the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC), along with two other women, Carolann Wright from Women's Health in Women's Hands in Toronto, and Susan Bazilli, from METRAC, the Metro Action Committee on Public Violence Against Women and Children.

The mandate for the NAC team was: to meet a wide range of women's groups; to observe women's participation in the democratic process; and to build long-term links with women working in grassroots and non-governmental organizations. In particular, the NAC team focussed on the sectors of poverty, health, violence against women, lesbian rights, and media. The NAC report will be available through NAC's head office in the fall. The report includes recommendations to the Canadian government, Canadian non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and CIDA (the Canadian International Development Agency.)

In this supplement, *Kinesis* presents Jaffer's interviews with violence against women worker Mmatshilo Motsei, and lesbian activists Maganathrie Pillay and Rosalee Telega. Jaffer is a Kenyan-born South Asian lesbian, editor of *Kinesis*, and works at the Vancouver Status of Women.



Women against violence

Mmatshilo Motsei is a violence-against-women researcher and activist based in Johannesburg. Motsei runs Agisangang Domestic Abuse Prevention and Training (ADAPT), which operates out of the Alexandra Clinic in Alexandra Township, a Black township outside Johannesburg with a population of more than 250,000. Kinesis spoke with her shortly after the first multi-racial elections in South Africa in April.

Fatima Jaffer: I believe the name of your organization has a symbolic meaning. Could you tell us about that and about your work with ADAPT?

Mmatshilo Motsei: I thought we should have a name that sends out a message, and that will also raise the issue of violence against women as more than just a women's issue, as being an issue for the whole community. In most of my work, I use the approach of how the apartheid system has broken down the Black family, [caused] the poverty we find ourselves in, and how there has been a serious erosion of our values and of our own way of doing things.

So when you say to people, "Agisangang," you are also saying, "Let's look how we have lost our way of doing things and how can we recapture that." And when you raise it in the context of violence against women, it raises the fact that women bashing, for instance, is not an acceptable practice culturally. The men of the 90s tell us it is traditionally acceptable for an African man to beat his wife, which is rubbish. There used to be social sanctions in place to discourage wife beating. A man would be lashed publicly in a traditional court or be made to pay a cow, for example. There are also proverbs in our languages that send out messages such as "A man who beats his wife is a coward." These proverbs were like acts of parliament [and] were instrumental in influencing people's attitudes.

At this point, I am the only one at ADAPT on a full-time basis. There is another woman who helps [out] as a volunteer, [doing] mainly administrative [tasks]. I am presently involved in putting together a board. It's an all-Black board, and the majority are women and youth. I feel youth must be represented on the board because we keep saying we are working for youth but we do things for them and don't let them do things for themselves. So the young men and women on the board will inform us of the problems facing youth and will, I hope, be in the forefront of assisting to develop intervention strategies specifically for youth. I am planning to have a youth dating violence program, to send a young man and young woman for training at a dating violence intervention program in Boston which is keen to accept two candidates from here. I have to raise funds for it first.

Starting a non-governmental organization like this, one that is totally run by Blacks, [is a] serious thing because people will be using labels like "You are racist." [Meanwhile] a Portuguese or Jewish or Greek club somewhere in Johannesburg isn't [called] racist.

The other injustice facing us is that a lot of white women in the women's movement would rather have us working for them. When [Black women] start being creative and courageous, when you start doing things your own way, [white women] start being threatened. Someone was talking to me about a book called *No Courage Without Roots*, which talks about how we don't have [our own] non-governmental organizations (NGOs) because people tend to impose the Western way of doing things. This author was saying we need to develop our own way of doing things, even at the risk of being seen as uninteresting to the funders, because the funders would rather fund patterns of doing things that they are familiar with. That is the challenge facing us.

Another challenge in terms of dealing with violence against women in this country is that, from the beginning, we need to involve men. The issue of men's oppression is crucial and needs to be addressed. If we want to change their attitudes, they have to take the initiative in creating healing circles for themselves. One or two sympathetic men could be the driving force for the men's movement.

Jaffer: Can you explain what you mean by men's movement? Because in North America, we have men's movements that are reactionary, focusing their energy on calling the women's movement "sexist" and "man-hating," and participating in the backlash against women in society.

Motsei: No, I mean a men's movement that is geared towards assisting men to heal, to realize how sexism has affected them, and how they need to reclaim their humanity, to uphold the dignity of women and children, and to do away with sexism in its entirety, whether it affects men or women.

Jaffer: Can you tell us who uses the services of ADAPT for the most part?



graphic from Agenda, No. 14, 1992

Motsei: The majority of the women are working class women. Almost all of them are referred to me for counselling by doctors and nurses [at Alexandra Clinic] after they report physical abuse, after treatment, or after reporting rape. There are a few who are self-referred, that is, they hear by word of mouth that there's a social worker at the clinic who's dealing with violence against women or family violence issues.

I feel enriched by my work at Alex. Western education has messed up our minds so we go into places like Alex with prescriptions of "Do this, don't do this; this is the right way, this is the wrong way." That's probably why women do workshops in English, so that people should not understand what we are saying, so that we can feel we have the knowledge [and] the power. Women look up to you and there isn't that kind of participation. You feel all-important and you see them as empty vessels.

One important thing I've learnt here is that we must use our own languages. I remember one day, a woman who speaks Tsonga, also called Shangan, which is spoken predominantly in [parts of] the Northern Transvaal, came in, wearing traditional Shangan attire. I addressed her in Shangan. I could see the surprise on her face. You see, because of apartheid, there's been this divide-and-rule strategy—you're Zulu, or you're Tswana, or you're Shangan. The Shangans are one of the groups that are looked down

upon by other ethnic tribes so when they go into institutions like clinics, they tend to expect ridicule, to expect people not to be prepared to talk their language. When I greeted her, and we talked, she was so relaxed.

One of the major challenges that is facing me is to learn the languages because you get the dialogue, and the language itself is so rich. At the moment, I speak Tswana, Sotho and Northern Sotho, Zulu, Shangan, and English. I can't speak Afrikaans well. I want to learn the two [African] languages I can't speak at this point, Venda and Xhosa, because I feel it is important that if I am going to go around and work with women, I need to speak their languages.

We should also [begin to] write pamphlets and books in African languages. What's the point of us writing in English when you can't reach the people. If the white women don't know our languages, that's too bad. They've taken away so much from us already and if there are things we need to keep for ourselves, we should do that. Obviously, you have one or two humane white women who feel courageous to learn the language to become part of you, so you accept that, because they did not just identify with your struggles theoretically, they made the effort to become part of you.

Jaffer: I believe you are one of very few Black women working in the area of violence against women as a counsellor?

Motsei: Yes. I'm being invited all over, like to the rural villages and it's very difficult to say No. So I'm torn between that [and my work at Alex]. At the same time, I feel the time is ripe, the ground is fertile already for us to plant that seed nationally—so once I have a counsellor who will work with me at the clinic, I'm going to concentrate on building a national network for Black women working in violence against women or even to help start groups in rural areas.

Jaffer: Things do seem to be moving very fast now across the country. I have met a number of women of colour who volunteer at rape crisis centres, who do support work, and so on, and I hear there are more and more Black women doing this work voluntarily, though they don't have much time to do that much.

Motsei: That's the disadvantage. I mean, issues in our communities are not just on violence; they are on justice, on democracy, housing, food, poverty, health. These are all issues of violence but in our community, there are few of us. When you talk to Black women who are working on these kinds of issues, you'll find how overburdened they are and how they don't have a life of their own—they are running from one meeting to the other. It drains you, but [you do it] because you feel an obligation, as a Black woman, to do something.

But we should guard against draining ourselves. Sometimes when you say no, it sounds selfish, but in the long term it's not selfish. If you do too much and burn out, then you're doing an injustice to women because you don't deliver according to your ability. Also, we have an obligation to take care of our own health. Then again, as a feminist, one of my biggest obligations is towards parenting. I have a responsibility to bring up children who are stable-minded—if I'm not there for them, if I don't give them love and support, they won't be able to love and support other people and then the cycle of stress and tension continues.

So we are torn at many levels, and we need to sit down and figure out quite carefully how we are going to deal with

The following is based on excerpts of an article, "Women Battering: A problem requiring medical attention," by Mmatshilo Motsei in Agenda: A Journal about Women & Gender, No. 16, 1993; various articles in the Agenda issue on "Violence in Focus" (No. 16, 1993); and on the article, "Key questions for election candidates," by the Agenda Collective, in Agenda, No. 20, 1994.

Violence against women is a worldwide, pervasive yet invisible problem. It is a phenomenon that cuts across political boundaries, social classes, religious af-

filiations, racial and ethnic groups. Even though violence against women is life threatening, and indeed lives have been lost, it is not perceived by the society as a problem that needs attention in the here and now.

In South Africa, it is difficult to ascertain the exact incidence of woman battering because of a lack of accurate statistics. It is estimated that one in six women are battered regularly by their male partners. The South African Women's National Coalition's information package on violence against women estimates that a woman is raped every 83

seconds in South Africa. Only one in 20 of these women report being raped to the police.

Black women, lesbians and women with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to rape and abuse. The direct and indirect suffering of women as a result of political violence in South Africa in the last few years has increased; it seems also that violence against domestic workers has increased in this period of political transition.



this. It's going to be difficult. We network theoretically but even with sharing of resources, we don't network or work together. People are used to working on their own, in their own corners.

One of the challenges facing us is to learn to work together, not just us Black women, but as women, the white women too. We should face our hatred and anger. As long as we pretend race is not an issue among women, we are far from solving the divide between us. We need to say it out in the open, we need to talk about racism in the women's movement, we need to, as Black women, talk about how angry we are after being used for centuries, after doing the spade work, after the fact that people interview us all the time and our lives become documented in the form of books and we don't have any say in the dissemination of information. We need to be able to say that outright and for white women to listen to that, and not take it personally. In the same way, white women should say outright their angers against us, because we've all been affected by apartheid differently. As soon as that happens, we'll be able to deal with the divide between Black and white women, and who knows, maybe we'll make an impact.

Jaffer: Actually, this is one of the ways we could be working together, in terms of a global women's network, linking the struggles of women everywhere, even though the contexts are different. There is a strong movement in Canada that recognizes the link between anti-racism and feminism. This is happening all over the world, in the West, in other

"As long as we pretend race is not an issue among women, we are far from solving the divide between us."

African countries, in Asia. Women of colour have been working for a long time to get white women to understand that recognizing differences doesn't make things narrower, it actually makes things broader and makes the movement stronger. We could be sharing strategies and learning from each other.

Motsei: Yes. And we need honesty and transparency to do that. Because when we are at these conferences, when I feel sad about the way that I am treated as a Black woman, most of us do not have the courage to stand up openly and say, "I am very angry about this." We would rather go home and get the support of our Black sisters and talk about it. Though that helps you to deal with the pain, it doesn't help to change the attitudes of the white women because you haven't told them.

The other issue is [white women] networking among each other. In a lot of women's organizations, you get the complaint from Black women that most of the decisions are made over the weekend, in [white women's] houses. When you come in on Monday, you are informed in a meeting about an action that's going to be taken. You are not informed to find out whether it should happen or not, you are told it will happen.

Jaffer: I believe you are working on a book project, with the intent of bringing Black women together?

Motsei: Basically this book will be written by Black women working in the area of violence against women. The battered women's movement in this country, like in many other countries, has been white-dominated, and we don't see things the same. The book would have the voices of Black women talking on issues close to them. For instance, I have written this chapter on culture and abuse, showing how traditional customs can be used to perpetuate violence in the home, about a woman being seen as a "minor," the man in the house being head of the household and being given the license to maintain "law and order."

I also use a lot of proverbs, and give examples of what happens, say, at traditional weddings, when the two families meet to discuss bride wealth. [The woman is] not involved, people just decide about her life. I also write about things that are told to you when you get married, like "When he comes home late, don't ask him where he's coming from; rather ask him if he has eaten and give him something to eat."

The book will be about things we have lived, and it's about time we had a voice. We are a nation that, in general, is not used to documenting in books our feelings and stories so a lot of information has been lost. We are an oral people, we pass things [between us] orally, like stories around the fire at night. We have to move beyond just being an oral people to document our knowledge in writing. If we don't do that, we are going to lose even more of our knowledge.

The book will also talk about national liberation, the excuse of "women's liberation later, national liberation now," in the context of violence against women, [with a focus on]

pushing the national liberation movements—now the government of the day—to take violence against women seriously. I'm thinking of asking someone to talk about how the different laws have impacted on working conditions for domestic workers. I have someone else who is keen to write a chapter on verbal abuse, showing how language, Zulu in this case, works to subordinate women and perpetuate the idea of the inferiority of women.

But the thrust of the book is to say, "Look what we have become, despite the oppression, even though they tried to put us down." We have done quite well when you consider where we are coming from. That's why I say to people I won't take my kids to a private school because, look at



Mmatshilo Motsei

where I come from—I went to school in a rural village, I was attending class under a tree—and look at where I am now. The drive is from within. Lots of people go to private schools but don't make it in life. The book will be about reclaiming our power and our strength, saying openly and not being ashamed about it that we are very powerful. We need to know that we are beautiful, intelligent, powerful, and that we are connected and not divided.

The danger we should guard against, because we are talking about how our own traditional customs tend to perpetuate the inferiority of women, is to [suggest] that African culture is inferior [and] oppressive because if we, as Black women, were writing about that, people would say, "This is what they are saying." That is why, when I talk about culture, especially where there are quite a lot of white women, my starting point is to say every culture has the good and the bad, and white women need to look at the good and backward aspects of their own cultures. So the book will also deal with the positive things African culture has done to uplift the status of women.

Jaffer: Something I've noticed in the debates on women's issues in elections coverage is that most of the white women act like there's no such thing as violence against white women. They mostly talk about violence against Black women, violence in rural communities. Yet most of the news stories of wife-killings and child abuse I've read here are in Africaner communities.

Motsei: Exactly. And the book will look at that, at Black women as powerful beings, reclaiming our humanity and saying to them, "Look, you tried hard enough to put us down. Forget it! You'd do better to join us."

Jaffer: The other project you are working on is building a clinic in your grandmother's village. Could you tell us about that?

Motsei: That idea came to me one morning when I was looking out at those shacks at the back of the office. I get a lot of my strength and direction from my ancestors; it's why I feel so strongly about capturing our way of doing things. I'm named after my grandmother, I think my grandmother lives in me. I talk to her most of the time although she died in 1988. I still write letters to her but I don't get around to posting them.

Jaffer: Why don't you post them?

Motsei: Well, see, I don't have the address [Laughs]. My vision is of a rural maternity home called Lhahi Mutsabelo—Lhahi is home, and Mutsabelo is sanctuary, not in the sense of a physical sanctuary but a sanctuary to get away from the Western way of doing things and digging for the positive values in us. Someone once said, "We have the jewels in us, we just have to dig very deep for them to come

out and glow." Other people have realised we have jewels in us, that's why they've tried so hard to make us not realise we have the jewels in us.

The maternity home would have Western-trained midwives as well as traditional birth attendants, the old midwife women who used to deliver babies in the villages and who know all about childbirth.

The building is going to be round, which is a traditional shape, and thatched. I can see the sign on the door—"Traditional Birth Attendants." Then we'll have another round office called "Traditional Healers." There's this old woman in the area who's well known for being able to treat children, to strengthen the baby so that the baby doesn't get diseases and die. This woman will have an office and she'll get paid because she has a skill that she should be rewarded for.

In the middle of all the buildings, we'll dig a hole for making fire. I can see women coming for an ante-natal clinic on a winter morning, and sitting around the fire. Women don't have to sit on lounge seats in some cold place. They can

"...we are not supposed to be where we are, given what we went through, but because we are resilient, we will be able to face [it] all."

wait around the fire. The idea is for people to feel comfortable. Another aspect will be the home birth system, [where] the traditional attendant and the midwife would go to the women's home. Some people would rather have their children at home. That is what used to happen.

Childbirth is so medicalized, there are all these technical advancements and yet, it's so simple, it's natural. We pay so much money for obstetricians. Childbirth is natural unless you have complications. That's why in the clinic traditional healers have to work with western-trained midwives, in case there are complications.

Jaffer: How are you going to fund this project?

Motsei: Well, I am struggling even with the [ADAPT] project I am running at Alex, because funders would rather fund people that are established. If you are not established, you need to be known or to have the right skin color. If it's a group of Black people, they should have at least one white person who is administering the money before they can be funded. But I've decided that whether they give me the money or not, I am not going to sit back. My nation is disappearing and I can't wait until I get funding; I have to do something.

In this work, you witness such pain and suffering, I sometimes wonder why I [do] this line of work. It's like opening a room full of pain [but] there is no way you are going to close the door and pretend there is no pain because you have seen and felt it. I feel I have been chosen to participate in the healing of Black people in this country. I have also had experiences of these calamities myself, perhaps so that I should understand where a woman is at. It's scary sometimes when you realize the extent of the damage done. The Africaners know that they have done a good job on us—they have gone for the roots, for our values, our languages, and you wonder whether we'll make it. But then you look around and see a resilient people. Rightfully speaking, we are not supposed to be where we are, given what we went through, but because we are resilient, we will be able to face [it] all.

I'm already planning for the next election [in 1999.] The challenge [is] to see where we will be, in terms of mental liberation, by the next election.

Jaffer: How about the immediate future? Many women seem to feel this election has been a healing process in itself. Do you agree?

Motsei: [It's been] healing in the sense that people have done it for the first time. People feel their dignity is restored as citizens of the country, that they have a say. But it is the beginning and I think the power lies in us realizing that it's the beginning, that you can't sit back and expect things to happen, you have to make things happen.

Jaffer: get the sense women realize that more than men.

Motsei: Women have been making things happen all the time, so they realize it. They have been on their own and they have made it happen. Consider the fact that the majority of the families are headed by women, and that women who have been in domestic service for years have managed to send their kids to universities. That's something to celebrate. So there's a celebration in the air, you can celebrate a beginning—because the danger also lies in us not claiming our victories, no matter how small.

For more information, or to donate, write: Mmatshilo Motsei, ADAPT (Agisnang Domestic Abuse Prevention & Training), P.O. Box 175, Berglei 2012, South Africa; or call 27-11-440-1231 or fax 27-11-887-9007.



A land of Contours



Maganthrie Pillay (centre standing) with cast and crew of *Contours*

by Maganthrie Pillay, as told to Fatima Jaffer
Maganthrie Pillay is the director of Contours, a play about black lesbians (lesbians of colour) produced in Cape Town last year, and a lesbian activist with the (Johannesburg) Lesbian Forum. She has worked as an educator and theatre practitioner in Cape Town and Durban, and currently resides in Johannesburg. Kinesis spoke with her in Johannesburg in April.

Fatima Jaffer: I gather you started calling yourself "lesbian" in Cape Town. Could you tell me a little about being a lesbian in Cape Town?

Maganthrie Pillay: I'd only [recently] started to call myself a lesbian. I knew I was gay, but I couldn't say "I'm gay" to myself. If anyone asked me, I'd speak about "this person I'm seeing," never [saying] he or she. I got irritated with not knowing how to identify myself for myself. I'd go into the library, read plays and books by lesbians. That helped me [acknowledge] that I am a lesbian. When people ask me now, "How was Cape Town?" I say, "If nothing else, I've just become more black and more gay." I actually prefer the Cape Town gay slang term, "Lettie."

Jaffer: Is that term only used in Cape Town?

Pillay: It's [part of] a language largely used in Cape Town. There are so many terms. For every race group, there's a different term. Lesbians call themselves *Lettie*.

Jaffer: Is that a derogatory term.

Pillay: Not at all. Lesbians and gay men call lesbians *Lettie*. I don't think straight people would say it.

Jaffer: I gather this is a black gay language. Do white people call themselves *Moffi* and *Lettie*?

Pillay: Some.

Jaffer: Tell me about some of the other terms.

Pillay: *Indhira* is an Indian [South Asian] and *Ursula* is white. African Blacks are *Natalie*. *Bag* means a man, and *Gertie* means a woman. If I say, "Look, that's a Cape Town *Natalie Gertie*," you know I mean, "look at that African woman, that African girl."

Jaffer: And you're an *Indhira Lettie*.

Pillay: Among other things. The language *Gail*, and started by some gay men in Cape Town in the 40s sometime, and used a lot in the 50s and 60s. Gay people use *Gail* in conversations with each other, and no one [outside the gay community] really knows what they're saying—like, it's all *Gail*. It's not a recent thing and has actually died down to some extent, because many people have become urbanized and, of course, white people started using *Gail* and it doesn't sound right.

Jaffer: So *Gail* would have been a township lingo.

Pillay: Yes. Mostly coloured [mixed race]. A lot of black lesbians use *Gail* in their everyday speech, [smatterings of] it here and there. In fact, what was exciting for [the cast and crew of *Contours*] about having black people watch our play was that they knew the *Gail* [that we used in the play]. The first night, we had the white academic sorts. But the second two nights, people ripped themselves laughing because they knew what we were talking about. We used a mixture of Afrikaans and a bit of *Gail*, though it was predominantly in English.

Jaffer: Tell me about the play—how did it come about, why you did it.

Pillay: Having had my first lesbian relationship and not [being] able to deal with that, not calling myself a lesbian, I was searching for something to do. I've always wanted to do a piece on gay women but I didn't quite know why [or] how and where to begin.

I dug within myself to see what in my life among a range of women's issues I most needed to explore, [and that] people in this country needed to see. I thought about my former lover, who had had such a difficult time being gay. She died in an accident. Her family used to say, "Oh, you just need a screw and you'll come right out," or, "You just need a man and you'll be fine." I thought about other black women in the country who may have had similar or worse experiences, who could not, at that point, call themselves gay.

All the lecturers at the university said, "You have to sit down and write why you want to do this play. What's driving you? How are you going to do it?" I spoke to people in theatre about how to devise a play. I began asking myself, "Where are the gay plays?" I hadn't found much. I went to

three arts festivals. One such annual festival in the Eastern Cape had artists of every kind, musicians, theatre people, dancers. It's a national arts festival so people come from all over the country [to it]. I looked carefully at the program to find something dealing with homosexuality but, apart from Jean Genet, didn't find anything. I asked myself "Where is [gay culture]?" The theatre world is full of gay people at every level but [therewasn't] anything on gay issues. I began thinking, I'm in the theatre world, it's my responsibility to look at these issues since no one else is doing it. As a black person, you can't say, "Where are the plays about black people," because white people are not going to do them. So black people do plays about black people, about themselves.

It's not an exact parallel for me, looking at being black, being gay and being a woman. They were almost separate things. I thought about looking at all these [identities] collectively because I am all of these things. I did some research. I was really surprised at the number of gay people in Cape Town, the number of articles there are on lesbianism, just in the public libraries. I spoke to lots of people, did lots of interviews and then approached my cast.

I already had two people I'd spoken to [about the play]. I had seen their work and liked their sensitivity. There was another person who was interested, [who] was not a drama person. As a theatre person myself, I believe if you have commitment and enthusiasm, it's irrelevant whether you can act. There's always some way you can contribute. There was a woman in one of my classes, who said she wouldn't mind being in it because she was actually working on a one-

woman piece [about] being gay that she hadn't had the opportunity to do yet. So I had my cast of four people, and a stage manager. I asked my lover to become part of the crew, to do the lights and also be assistant stage manager.

Jaffer: So you weren't necessarily looking for women with theatrical experience or lesbians?

Pillay: I knew it may not have been that easy to find lesbians. I had to deal with the issue of straight people acting as gay people - what is their sincerity, and so on. It was initially problematic for me. It's not that open, even in Cape Town, which is considered the queer city. So I had to use straight women. I thought the cause is greater than that one

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by Fatima Jaffer

This following is a brief overview of some of what I learnt in South Africa about lesbian organizing. I focused on urban black lesbians, largely organizing in the Johannesburg area and neighbouring townships. Since I do not speak any South African languages, I was unable to communicate with lesbians who did not speak English. I chose not to meet directly with any of the white-dominated organizations. Most of the Afrikaner and English lesbians and gay men I spoke with were not affiliated with any organizations.

The new South Africa will be the first country in the world to incorporate lesbian and gay equality rights into its constitution, which says something about the level of organizing for lesbians and gays in the country. The extract from the Bill of Rights, Gender Rights section in the constitution reads:

1. Discrimination on the grounds of gender, single parenthood, legitimacy of birth, or sexual orientation shall be unlawful.
2. Legislation shall provide remedies for oppression, abuse, harassment, or discrimination based on gender or sexual orientation.
3. Educational institutions, the media, advertising and other social institutions shall be under a duty to discourage sexual and other types of stereotyping.

More lesbians, especially black lesbians, are coming out partly because protection for gays and lesbians is in the constitution. More people feel able and free to come out and take risks. They're coming out politically, wanting to meet and organize together with other lesbians.

Lesbians and gay men have always been part of the liberation movements, just as in liberation struggles every-

where. They are active in the women's movement, the national liberation struggle, the political parties, trade unions, civic structures, and rural women's organizations.

A lot of the black lesbians and gays [lesbian and gays of colour] I met had been active in the mass people's movements of the 1980s, such as the United Democratic Front—the 1980s grassroots movement that kept the African National Congress (ANC) alive within the country when the ANC was banned.

There didn't seem to be enough being done by the women's movement to recognize the lesbian and gay movements. While many of the lesbians I spoke with have been part of the national liberation struggle and, within that, the women's liberation movement, there has been little done to link the particular oppression of lesbians to the oppression of women in general. The Women's National Coalition makes little mention of lesbian issues or homophobia in the Women's Charter, which is a list of women's demands drawn up for presentation to the new South African government.

Lesbians and gays are active in all the political parties, the ANC, the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC), and the IFP (Inkatha Freedom Party). The ANC appears to be the most open—there are gay and lesbian chapters and caucuses within the organization, and there is some space for people to come out and be who they are. This is only a recent development.

Until the late 1980s, whites dominated most of the organizations. As well, most of the organizing has been done by gays and lesbians together, with gay men defining the agenda. My general impression was that the white gay community and the black gay community were quite differ-



Jo'burg's Lesbian Forum

by Rosalee Telela, as told to Fatima Jaffer

Rosalee Telela is a longtime anti-apartheid activist and a founding member of the Lesbian Forum in Johannesburg. She has also been active with the Gay and Lesbian Organization of Witwatersrand (GLOW). She presently works at *Spek* magazine, one of South Africa's national feminist publications. Kinesis spoke with Telela after the first multi-racial elections in South Africa in April.

Fatima Jaffer: Could you tell me about your involvement with the Gay and Lesbian Organization of Witwatersrand (GLOW), and how the Lesbian Forum, which is unaffiliated with GLOW, was formed?

Rosalee Telela: There used to be a lesbian forum within GLOW in the early 90s. Basically, it fizzled out. Women stopped coming to the meetings. Some people had a problem with women retaining positions of leadership for too long, or with women being too dominant, where if they say "let's do this," it's a decision rather than a suggestion. Lesbians from the [Black] townships felt uncomfortable because meetings were always held in [the city, not in townships]. Also black women just didn't feel comfortable being around white women all the time.

There was also the problem of people not wanting the GLOW Lesbian Forum to be political, of wanting one long joll [party]. People came to the GLOW Lesbian Forum because they had heard or read in the GLOW newsletter that if you went there, you could meet somebody.

But some of us believed we could have the jolls as well as everything else. There should be a space where women can find support—and support can also be political—and meet other people, and...also have other aspects, for example, an education forum for lesbians, from general information to safe sex.

Jaffer: So when did the [Johannesburg] Lesbian Forum get started?

Telela: People were talking about restarting a lesbian forum, but no one argued for it being part of GLOW. GLOW is seen as being male dominated, especially white male dominated.

Jaffer: I was told the membership of GLOW is 80 percent Black.

Telela: Yes, mostly Black male. But I'm talking about the leadership. It was mostly white males who were trying to take control of GLOW. So when we were talking about starting a Lesbian Forum, no one even raised the issue: "excuse me, but why aren't we part of GLOW?"

Anyway, at one informal gathering, we decided to set a date for an official Lesbian Forum meeting. We called as many people as we could and that meeting was a hell of a

success. We moved forward more than we ever did in 10 meetings in the Lesbian Forum that was within GLOW. But while the Lesbian Forum is separate from GLOW, we would like to retain ties with GLOW because we've got to break what's going on in there. Also no one in GLOW has come to

question why we don't call ourselves the GLOW Lesbian Association. They may assume that just because we're not within GLOW, we're apolitical. I think some people could overlook us, [yet] we could actually be more political than GLOW.

Jaffer: One of the things you've been doing is trying to raise funds, for example, you recently organized a pre-elections party for lesbians. I gather that was the first fundraiser?

Telela: Of its kind, yes. People are willing to work for this forum, and the success we had with the party is just one step of it. For example, with these [lesbian of colour] books you brought from Canada, women want to read these books and are willing to pay money to do so, so we can raise funds that way.

We also want to start a newsletter. Women who have never written in their lives want to be involved and to contribute. At one point, someone suggested she knew someone who has the skills to help us set up a Lesbian newsletter. I got very angry and said "I think we've got enough skills within the Lesbian Forum, and if we don't have enough skills, we've got the potential and...talent." One problem I've always had with the black-and-white thing is that, generally, when [Black] women start something, we're always had to go out there and find people [in order to] get some kind of skills or support...and eventually, the [white people] start leading us and we never learn anything. We never ask ourselves in the first place, "Can we do it? Do we have enough skills? Certainly there is enough potential and talent, but are we willing to learn the skills?" I believe we can make it on our own.

The other thing is that the Forum is going to grow—the number of people we have now [in the Forum] and the number of people we're going to have from [our recruiting]

at the party, and from people who spread the word shops that.

Jaffer: From attending the meetings, it seems the Lesbian Forum is presently mostly made up of black lesbians.

Telela: Yes.

Jaffer: So the Forum's intention is to have a place where black women, in particular, can get together?

Telela: Yes, it's partly so that black women can meet. At the same time, we do not want to alienate the white lesbians who we know are progressive. However, I don't think we'd let someone join the Lesbian Forum just because of the jolls, someone who is pretty conservative. There has to be some form of checks and balances. As the organization begins to grow, we'll have to have, for example, membership forms that have specific questions on it. If we discover somebody is racist or discriminates on the basis of class, we should have a way of dealing with that, sitting down and talking about it and saying this is unacceptable.

There are going to be a lot of women involved in [the Forum] and the majority are going to be black. Black women are finally feeling comfortable within a forum and that has to continue. We should also have a space for white women who are progressive, for example, women who have been involved in student or socialist movements, or with the

ANC and who we know who are progressive. Creating a space for all lesbians is basically what we're fighting for, particularly our right to exist in this reality as Black women and as lesbians. Also, we don't know where things are going [after the elections] and I don't think things will change immediately. We don't want people to be afraid to go to meetings because of violence so, from now on, meetings are going to be held both in [the city] and [the Black townships].

Jaffer: Will it be safe for lesbians in the townships to have their friends over?

Telela: People have many lesbian parties in the townships, and many gatherings with lesbians.

Jaffer: I've heard that it's supposed to be harsher for lesbians and gays in the townships because some people live with families and there is little privacy?

Telela: Yes, but obviously some families are more accepting.

Jaffer: What about the homophobia women will have to deal with in public, in the taxis going to the townships, for example.

Telela: I've always had a problem with people thinking homosexuality is more accepted in some communities and not in other communities. It's just different. Also, people can be very weird in terms of what they see. There could be a whole bunch of women together, kissing or whatever, and people won't actually be able to tell what's going on. Some would get it, many wouldn't.

Jaffer: What was it like for you—you were born in Soweto, but then you went away to school? How did you come out?

Telela: I'll tell it to you as I had to tell it in high school and we had to write an essay on it. I was in a Catholic school. I stood in front of the class, and there was this gorgeous nun—that's the reason I completed the essay. I was born in White City [a township] in Soweto, so it's really not a "white" city [laughter]. I know Tshivavelo [another township in Soweto] better because that's where I grew up. I think my generation was the last generation that had a real experience of township life. As a child growing up under apartheid, [the townships] had criminals, shebeens [home-based, beer-selling cooperatives], we had people dressing up to go to funerals, but we were still able to maintain and retain some kind of dignity as people living that kind of life. People didn't give up.

Most of our parents couldn't afford to buy us toys. Children in townships were creative then, we'd make our



Rosalee Telela

ent. White lesbians and gay men don't have the concept of liberation that Black gays and lesbians do. For example, the Gay and Lesbian Association of South Africa (GLAS), a predominantly white organization based in Cape Town, and one of, if not the oldest gay and lesbian organization in South Africa, has been quite ineffective in pushing for any kind of lesbian and gay rights.

When the political organizations were unbanned in 1990, and there was talk about drawing up a new constitution, lesbians and gays, like every other oppressed sector, spoke up, organized, and began to push for their rights. The first South African Gay and Lesbian Pride march took place in Johannesburg in October 1991—it was also the first on the continent of Africa. The Gay and Lesbian Organization of Witwatersrand (GLOW) was a prime mover behind the march. Soon afterwards, a program to collect submissions for a Lesbian and Gay Charter was put into action. Lesbians and gays went to political meetings, lobbied from within the ANC and outside, and won the right to have the constitution enshrine their rights.

At the same time, anti-gay laws in South Africa contradict the constitutional protection. It is unclear whether the new legislation will re-write laws under the equality rules of the new constitution, or whether old laws will have to be challenged in the courts by individuals. Gays and lesbians are going to have to fight for every gain, to continue to put pressure on the new government to ensure that the laws that contradict the constitutional protections are overturned.

There is an awareness of this among the lesbians and gay men with whom I met. Things were changing radically, almost daily. While organizing as black gays and lesbians is relatively new, especially for lesbians of colour, it is strong and growing very fast.

Most Black and South Asian lesbians still live in the townships. The closest Black townships are about a half-hour "taxi" ride away from Johannesburg. Taxis are vans seating as many as 16 to 18 people, mostly used by Blacks, which take people to and from the townships and rural areas, and are the primary form of transportation. It's very dangerous to travel in the city and to the townships after 6 pm because of the taxi wars, and the high probability of being raped, robbed or killed. The Lesbian Forum, for the first time for any lesbian organization in the country, holds meetings in both the townships and the city.

Politically, most of the lesbians in the Lesbian Forum tend to support the liberation parties though they do not organize along party lines. GLOW officially endorsed the ANC in the elections. While most of GLOW's membership belongs to the ANC, their membership cuts across political lines. They looked at the positions of the different political parties on lesbian and gay rights, and the party that seemed to best represent gay interests was the ANC. Much of the ANC's leadership is homophobic, but when some of its members made homophobic comments during the campaign and were questioned by GLOW, the ANC responded to GLOW each time, and apologized in several cases.

The Pan-Africanist Congress, on the other hand, openly says lesbianism and homosexuality is un-African, and that they do not consider rights for lesbians and gays necessary. This caused quite an uproar at the time and its position could change.

Black lesbians are working to place homosexuality in traditional African terms. There are words for gays and lesbians in Sotho and Zulu, and women were asking where these words come from if homosexuality is un-African and doesn't exist in African cultures.

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Interview with Magantherie Pillay
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issue. I knew lesbians were desperate for something—they had watched *Desert Hearts* I don't know how many times!

Jaffer: To different extents, all over the world, lesbians are desperate for images of ourselves.

Pillay: Exactly. I did a lot of research and found one poetry reading that dealt with gay women but again that was not South African. Being black, being gay, being women in this country has a particular context I wanted to explore.

I had three weeks to do research, get the cast together, get them to come to terms with being gay and then write out a script and rehearse.

Jaffer: How did you come up with the name, *Contours*?

Pillay: We had a brainstorming session before we actually started, and thought about how we could encompass all that we wanted to say in one title. The term "contours" is sensual and conjures up images of women. It's also [about] the contours of our minds. And geographically, it's about the contours of our country.

Jaffer: What is the play about?

Pillay: [It's] about women loving women in South Africa. It is set in a women's club in a racially mixed area, meaning mixed black people, or people of colour. Lola comes from Ryland, an Indian community in Cape Town, and she dares to defy her community.

Danielle, Parviva, and Isolda have all struggled against many oppressions and discriminations from family, friends, and society. Their search for support echoes the lives and experiences of many women in Cape Town. This play is dedicated to women in South Africa who've had to and still have to hide, to live double lives and to pretend. The message is, you are not alone. The play looks also at how lesbians survive despite all their constraints.

When I was in my relationship in Durban, we didn't know any lesbians, except one lecturer at the University. I didn't tell anybody [I was seeing my lover] for about nine months. Not telling anybody was a real burden. I felt constantly under pressure.

A couple of people used to call me "Martina" but I'd say, "How can you call me Martina?" because calling you Martina means calling you a lesbian.

Jaffer: Martina Narvratilova?

Pillay: Yes. [laughter] When I spoke to women in Cape Town, they seemed to have an incredible support system going. I found groups of women in Cape Town, [and] I wanted that sense of community. That's how lesbians survive—with support from friends, and from other gay people. So the play [focused on] community in South Africa.

Jaffer: You're talking about gay and lesbian communities?

Pillay: No, I'm talking about any community. Because of the nature of apartheid, communities were a major part of people's lives. How does a lesbian in a township cope? Do people know? Does she hide? Someone told me about a woman who was burned to death in her shack because they found out that she was a lesbian. For me that was just so phenomenal. How could it be possible? How could people get away with it? So with [each] character we tried to make sure the audience had a picture of their community. You knew their context, who they were, where they come from, where they were at and hopefully where they were going.

[In] the play all these women come together at this club for various reasons. It's a woman's club, not necessarily lesbian. Each person's story is shared with you through monologues [and through the characters'] interactions.

Jaffer: What was the story for the Black woman?

Pillay: I interviewed a dancer in Cape Town [on whom the role is based]. She was from KwaMashu [a Black township in Durban], and had had a lesbian relationship with her dance teacher, who is white. They lived together in KwaMashu, [and] were called S'tibane. This term means someone who has both [sexual] organs, a hermaphrodite. She told me the only way that people in the townships can conceptualize two women having a relationship is if they think you have two sexual organs—that is, you must have a penis, which is what makes you have a relationship with a woman.

Jaffer: And then it's acceptable?

Pillay: Not necessarily. It was acceptable in the case of this woman at first, but not later. So she moved to Durban where she lived with her white lover. Durban is quite racist. The owner of the building they lived in said they would have to move because she was Black. But she looks like Whoopi Goldberg, and after she saw a picture of Whoopi Goldberg on the wall somewhere, and because Whoopi Goldberg is a famous Black person, she began to realize she was actually black. She had quite a difficult time of it, though, and they too actually broke up last year. At any rate, that's her story.

In the play, the character comes from KwaMashu. She's living with a friend in Cape Town and loves her but doesn't know what to do—the issue of homosexuality is not something she really understands. After coming to the club,

meeting other people and hearing their stories, she comes to an understanding of who she is. It ends with her saying she's going to tell this woman she loves her, but she doesn't say, "I'm going to tell her I want to make love to her," just "I love her." The idea is that people are at different places in the play.

Isolda has worked in the struggle, she was in detention. In prison, when two women are close to each other, each would be put in solitary confinement. Isolda comes to Cape Town. She and Lola had had a relationship before. Lola is now in her 40s, had been married, has children. She had her first relationship with a woman after she got divorced. We don't know if she actually carried on living with this woman. We don't tell all, we just [create] possibilities.

Then there's Danielle, we call her Danny, who is in love with someone called Sherin, who is based on someone I know. Sherin got married, but is still having a relationship with Danny. It's that issue about marriage and having a lesbian relationship. How does Danny deal with having a relationship with a married woman? She's at the club because Sherin was going to meet her there but Sherin doesn't. What does that mean? She expresses her frustration of being with a married woman, and the whole thing of having a relationship in toilets. I did the same thing with my first

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lover. It's something many women might be ashamed to talk about, but it's a reality. Where do you go? How do you make love? In townships, for example, where you have ten people living in one house, how do you make love to anybody at all, if ever?

Jaffer: Did you interview anyone who told you how they did it?

Pillay: Not really, but obviously they do somehow. You can't deal with a lot of this stuff, all you can say is, "These are our lives."

Jaffer: Who was in the audience?

Pillay: We made the play mostly for black women and, I guess, lesbians. I met an African woman who couldn't express to me how it had helped her in terms of who she was. Now she could see other people felt this way too. For me, it was those people saying, "Thank you, that was my life there," that made it so rewarding.

At some point in the play, Lola and Isolda kiss. The [academic] supervisor of the play said, "No kiss. It's not the actual kiss [the audience] is interested in, it's the issue. You don't have to see them actually do anything, talking about it is enough." We didn't listen, because we knew, as a white heterosexual male, he couldn't deal with the image of two [black] women kissing. We knew we had to have the kiss no matter what. A lot of dykes said they came to see the play just to see two black South African women on stage kissing.

A lot of straight people came to watch. One of the actors' granny came and said, "Oh, it was such a nice play." Although her granddaughter was kissing a woman, it was okay, it wasn't serious. If it had been a man she was kissing on stage, it would have been problematic.

Jaffer: That's a different kind of homophobia.

Pillay: Yes, her family's very Christian and homophobic and were amazed at the lives of the characters. They never knew. That's what we kept hearing. We didn't want to isolate or alienate anybody. A lot of people said we needed to be more aggressive. We didn't see the need. Later on, we can be more militant. Right now, we need support. We belong to communities, we cannot afford to say, "Fuck you."

A few days after the play, I went to the beach with my niece and three of her male friends. She whispered to me, "Don't tell them about your play." I said, "Why not?" She said, "Because they are that." She insisted one of the boys

liked the other boy. She said, "I can see the way they're looking at each other."

Jaffer: She's seeing gay people everywhere?

Pillay: It's funny, this ten-year-old now thinking about alternatives, about homosexuality.

Jaffer: How did you advertise the play?

Pillay: We left about four posters at a place called Fox in Cape Town, which is mostly frequented by lesbians. We gave posters to Abigail [the Association of Bisexuals, Gays and Lesbians], and the Moulin Rouge, a club frequented mostly by middle-class and working-class gay people, mostly from townships, mostly black, some older white men—the kind of place where you have a sense people live in all kinds of closets.

We left them at various other organizations, at the ANC [African National Congress] Women's League, and places in Cape Town where we knew people. We sent press releases to the newspapers but, partly because it was a student production, no one acknowledged it.

Jaffer: I've heard that with gay and lesbian rights enshrined in the constitution, more and more people are coming out.

Pillay: Absolutely. At the ANC rave [concert] at Zoo Lake Park [in Johannesburg], I saw lots of men holding hands.

Jaffer: I was there and I saw that too, but I wasn't sure if that was just an African thing or a gay thing. In Kenya, when was growing up, everyone held hands—men with men, women with women.

Pillay: You're right. It could have been either, but I just smile at them anyway. And of course there were lots of lesbians. I went with a friend, and I introduced her to everyone I knew there, and later I realised, everyone I introduced her to is a dyke. It was amazing. I thought, I know a lot of dykes.

When I started doing the [the play], I wasn't out to many people. As I worked on the play, I came to terms with being gay. I'm in a totally different mind space now. I'm so gay positive, so proud of being gay. I'm on a mission to find lesbians, to get them together, even informally. It's so important to get people to know that there are other gay people. One issue is how to deal with gays and lesbians in schools, [and] younger people coming out. My niece was still at school when she found out [I'm a lesbian]. She went on a mission at school, giving speeches about homosexuality, challenging everybody. As a teacher myself, I wonder if I do go into a school situation how open I should be. What impact will it have?

Jaffer: Theatre seems to be good way to raise awareness.

Pillay: Absolutely. You can have tons of books, people can read them, but they still don't believe it. Actually seeing it, changing the image for them, is powerful. Theatre is media, and through theatre, you can change visual images, and people's conceptions and assumptions at the same time.

Jaffer: How about your family? Do they know you're lesbian? Did they know you did this play?

Pillay: My mother asked me what I was doing, and I told her I was directing a play about gay women. She's in her 60s and I don't know whether she even knows what gay is. I have problems with what I do on stage anyway. In one play, I played a pregnant woman who had to get married because of the pregnancy and she was ashamed of me. "How could you do this, everyone will think you're this sort of girl?"

Jaffer: What's next? Are you working on a play in Johannesburg?

Pillay: I'm working on *Snake With Ice Water*, which is the title of a book of South African women's prison writings. I'd like to play a lesbian character in this play. It will be playing [at a theatre] shortly after you leave South Africa, but we're looking at taking it overseas. Our main targets are penitentiaries and schools, here and abroad. As a student, I never came across any plays by South African black women. So it's something that needs to be done.

Jaffer: In Canada, it's frustrating for me as a South Asian lesbian that sometimes there seem so few of us that are out, partly because we live in a racist society and there are few avenues to discuss sexuality in our communities. Are there a lot of Indian lesbians in Cape Town?

Pillay: Yes, but they don't come out to a large number of people. It's such a closed subject, you don't see many Indians lesbians completely out. Anyway, there's not many places to go and be out at. There are a lot of Indian lesbians on campus—university campuses are breeding grounds for lesbians. But it's always in the city or university, never in the Indian townships.

Hopefully now that gay and lesbians rights are in the constitution, we'll have court protection. I feel so excited. There's so much to do. People often talk about going overseas but now is the time we need to stay [here], to organize. I feel so free to organize. There are still lots of legal issues to deal with around our rights, but [that] doesn't discourage me.



own toys, we'd make up our own games. You'd find something that wasn't broken, wash it up and put it in the house. Children grew into adults very quickly. When I was 12, I could run a household. You had to. I'm glad I had that experience in a sense, because I see [parents] in the townships today buy their children Barbie dolls with white, flowing hair, slim bodies. Even [when I was growing up], there were no Black dolls and if you found one, it was a gross misrepresentation. We would remake people out of clay. If my mother had had the money to buy me a Barbie doll, I'm sure she would have. I was never asked whether I wanted a Barbie doll or a gun—not that I would have wanted a gun either. My point is, would I have been able to make a car [out of wire] myself if my mother had been able to buy me the toy? Would I have been able to sit down with other boys—girls sitting down with boys—making cars without anyone raising an eyebrow? I did it until I was in high school. A lot of people did not feel forced to really [think about] things like, "do I sit in this way?", "do I play with dolls or cars...?" [That kind of sexism] wouldn't be an issue.

My mother never kept me away from boys because I think she knew I wouldn't get sexually involved with them. I was never sexual with boys. Chatting with them was nice, but I'd punch someone if they tried to make a move on me. And then in high school, when you are 15 or 16, things start changing but they didn't really for me. I had friends who were boys, and friends who were girls.

This brings me back to the attitude some people have that homophobia in the Black community is more rife than in the white community. I don't think so. It's different in the way it's expressed and operates on different levels. When I was growing up, there always used to be gay men around. People would call some of them 'S'hibane [hermaphrodites] and some people used to laugh at them. But then they would leave them alone because they were part of the community.

As more and more people found out about homosexuality [and thought of it] in terms of it being white by reading in the paper about white men or white women doing so-and-so, we found that the homophobia increased and expressed itself as it would in the white communities. So while homophobia has always been [in our communities,] now there is a different element to it. People are so worked up, there's more of that attitude of "Jesus, this is shit, it's anti-christ, it's white!" even though homosexuality has existed for such a long time in African cultures.

Jaffer: I've heard the same thing in the women's movement in South Africa around sexism—about how white women are fighting for their rights and how that's affecting Black women adversely. Whereas Black women have been fighting for their rights all along. The expressions of that fight are not appropriate for many African women though.

Telela: Yes, exactly. The point is I've lost out on all those parts of African history that talk about homosexuality because I've had to go through the kind of education that a white child is supposed to go through—but mine is semi what a white child got. I also lost out on the other side of my education of being told all our stories. My grandmother didn't have the time to do tell me these stories—she was too busy brewing beer to sell for her children and grandchildren to eat something. She has some of those stories left, but we've really lost out on so much.

But those stories are being recovered now, and people have started talking about [our histories]. I hope oral history comes alive again. Its not us who've been pushing [these stories] under the carpet, it's white people, the settlers. They had their story and their story was the only story to tell, basically. The point is, homosexuality has always existed and it's been more acceptable within our communities because you had no division of sexuality—there was sexuality, and it had different aspects to it. The extent of homophobia that exists today and the reason why it exists today is because it was set apart, not accepted as different, but taken out as an aberration and as not being part of sexuality. If you set something apart as unequal, not as accepting difference but as "jeez, look at those evil people," as they do with race, or with gender, how can you accept [homosexuality]?

This, said, we mustn't forget there is homophobia within Black communities as well. I'm not going to excuse any of

that behaviour just because it has been influenced by white people. It doesn't justify it at all.

Jaffer: When did you come out?
Telela: I was in my first year at university in 1988. I was a woman's organiser with the Black Students Society (BSS). We had what we'd call a "non-racial alliance" with the National Bureau of South African Students (NBSAS), which was a white progressive students' movement. I started meeting a lot of white women. I met this woman I used to know in the Young Christian Students [a "non-racial" group] when I was still in high school. We were talking about what had happened to her, what her life was like and she said, "I'm a lesbian." I said, "What's that?" She said, "Oh, I'm attracted to women." And I said, "So am I," not realizing what the hell I was saying. I guess that was the point I came out.

Being in the BSS, whenever I spoke to Black women and told them about my attraction [to women], they started moving away from me. So I became silent about it, and was able to rejoin women in the BSS and the women's group. People forgot what I said about my attraction to women.

I found a whole movement with white lesbians. It was very difficult because I was very clear in my politics. My [own] organization may have seen it as a betrayal but it wasn't. I wasn't spending time with white women on the level that they were white women but because they were lesbian women. Yet, though [the BSS] had a "non-racial

magazine's principles are to be non-homophobic but, when it comes to practice, it's very difficult to put that into effect when I'm all alone there. I feel that, "Shit, people will think I'm pushing my own agenda," even though I know it's not my own, it just feels like that.

That's why, in my dream which I'm going to realize in a few months, I'll probably be doing more work with the Lesbian Forum newsletter or magazine, and be more committed to that than I would be, to anything else because that [part of me] needs to come out. Its just been left there too long.

Jaffer: In terms of international solidarity and lesbians, especially lesbians of colour organizing elsewhere in the world trying to get connected with each other and trying to work together, what would you say is the way to work and build solidarity in practical terms?

Telela: First, we need information. We need to know what's going on with black lesbians everywhere. We need to link up with each other within the country, as well as outside it. We need some kind of communication. It could be through exchanging newsletters, through writing letters, for example, to you at *Kinesis*. Basically, (and I use the word I hate most when it comes to organizing) we need to network. I'd rather say, we need to keep in touch.

After we've established some kind of contact, then maybe we can move from here and get what develops, though maybe each of us can give and get. That's the situation that should prevail.

Jaffer: One of the things I've heard from other lesbians is their concern around keeping an eye on what's happening in South Africa for women, especially around the constitution. The constitution is the first in the world to enshrine equality for lesbians and gays but the existing laws contradict that.

The point is I've lost out on all those parts of African history that talk about homosexuality... but those stories are being recovered now, and people have started talking about [our histories].



graphic from Agenda, no 18, 1993

Telela: There's going to be a real struggle up ahead and we do need people watching, we need to know people. Like there is a "media watch" around women's issues, we need to have a "constitution watch" because there are all sorts of things that can slip past us now that the votes have come in. There's going to be a lot of work for us to do there. If we can have examples of what you're doing on those kinds of issues, for example, that would help. We have a long way to go, [since] we're only just getting this new constitution.

Jaffer: I've heard that [Johannesburg] is not really the hub of lesbian and gay activity, in South Africa - Cape Town is.

Telela: I beg to differ, my dear. Who holds the annual gay and lesbian pride marches in the whole of South Africa? Johannesburg. We had pride marches every year since 1991, and there's going to be another one this year on November 10. There's also another kind of visibility in Johannesburg—in Hillbrow [a "gay" or mixed-race area in Johannesburg], you see gays and lesbians openly on the street.

Jaffer: Do you think increased visibility of Black gays and lesbians in the 90s is also going to make life for lesbians in the townships and in the rural areas more difficult? There are many lesbians in the rural areas, but they don't call themselves "lesbians."

Telela: There's a price to pay with every struggle. Being a Black lesbian in this country is not easy. First, there is the race thing, then there is the fact that you're a woman. It's combined. As much as a woman never stops struggling, a lesbian can never stop struggling. In terms of the Lesbian Forum, the issue is how we're going to affect change. We get a lot of flack from Black women that call themselves progressive, there's no doubt about it, but there is going to be a lot of change in a lot of people's lives from now on and some people are just going to have to be there.

To contact or send a donation to the Lesbian Forum, write to: Yoyo, PO Box 1977, Joubert Park, Johannesburg 2044, South Africa; or through: Rosalee Telela, c/o SPEAK, Box 241363, EXCOM 2023, South Africa.



Resources

Agenda: Billed as "A Journal About Women and Gender," *Agenda* is a feminist forum mostly targeted at professionals, educators, community workers, students and members of women's organizations. For more information, write: Room 29, 20 St. Andrew's Street, Durban 4001, South Africa; or call 27-31-3054074 or fax 27-31-301-0740.

Agenda

A JOURNAL ABOUT WOMEN & GENDER
R10.00 (VAT INC) NO 20 1994

Politics, power and



How should women be represented in the new political structures?

Audio-Visual Alternatives: A non-profit video production unit which facilitates the production of audio visual programs by organizations involved in education and community development. It also provides training to urban and some rural women in video production skills. For more information, write: Office D1, MTB, Psychology Department, University of Natal, King George V Avenue, Durban 4001, South Africa, or call 27-31-816-1026 or fax) 816-2618.

Association of Bisexuals, Gays and Lesbians (Abigale): Membership is largely mixed-race and Black lesbians and gays. Abigale has a newsletter; organizes workshops on safer sex, and legal rights for lesbians and gays; have a strong anti-racist agenda; organized a Pride March and a Gay Film Festival in December 1993; and are fundraising for a gay shelter in Khayalisha [Black township in/outside Cape Town]. For more information, write: PO Box 16214, Vlaeberg 8018, Cape Town, South Africa, or call Midi Achmat at 27-21-24-1532.

Transvaal Rural Action Committee

(TRAC): Set up in 1983 by Black Sash to assist rural communities resist the forced removals and evictions, TRAC has since expanded its work to include rural development and settlement planning, rural women's issues, and restoration of land to those who were forcibly removed. TRAC has fieldworkers, a researcher, a development environmentalist, a regional planner, and a women's projects officer. TRAC also produces a quarterly newsletter and also distributes the National Land Committee's publication, *Land UPDATE*. TRAC is linked with the Rural Women's Movement [see below]. For more information, write: TRAC, The Coordinator, PO Box 2827, Johannesburg 2000, South Africa; or call 27-11-833-1063 or fax 834-8385.

University of Natal Media Resource

Centre: ERIS is a clearinghouse for information about educational resources. They compile databases of information for distribution, such as directories of South African Resource Centres; address details of local non-governmental organizations, including civics and trade unions, and directories of organizations engaged in media and development work in other countries. It also produces the only comprehensive catalogue of videos produced in Africa. Are currently involved in project to "reform" SA's library system and databanks. For more information, write: University of Natal, Department of Education, King George V Avenue, Durban 4001, South Africa.

Speak Magazine or radio: Monthly, national feminist magazine. Covers wide range of topics including violence against women, women's organizing, health, poverty, rural women, women with disabilities, and have started writing about lesbian rights. *Speak* is also in process of setting up facilities to train women in radio and produce radio shows for broadcast at various community stations, and/or produce shows to sell to radio stations on women-specific issues. For more info or to subscribe, write: P.O. Box 241363, EXCOM 2023, South Africa, or call 27-11-29-6166, or fax 27-11-333-5862.

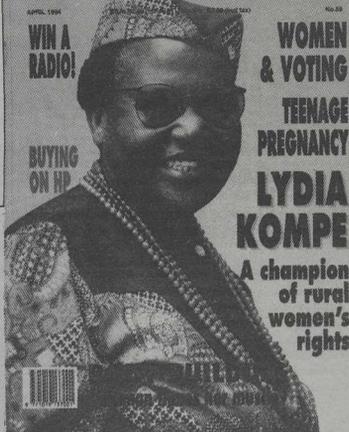


Rural Women's Movement: An informal organization since 1986, it was formally launched in 1990. The RWM mobilizes women around issues such as shortage of health facilities, forced removals and evictions, polygamy, lobolla, pensions, jobs, abortion, culture, land, water, electricity, customary law, and other issues specific or critical to rural women. For more information, write: RWM, c/o TRAC, PO Box 2827, Johannesburg 2000, South Africa; or call 27-11-833-1063 or fax 834-8385.

Women's Development Foundation

(WDF): The WDF was launched in 1992 at a meeting attended by women from different organizations. Its mandate is to strengthen the efforts of women through various means of empowerment, such as training in "advocacy and governance." It was active in voter education for women in the build-up to the elections. For more information, write: WDF, PO Box 31028, Braamfontein 2017, Johannesburg, South Africa; or call 27-11-339-1895 or fax 339-6533.

SPEAK



KINESIS

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS
1974-1994



Sandy Scofield belts out some songs from her new cd.



Enthusiastic partiers, Ashley and Brittany in one of their few seated moments.



MCs Agnes Huang and Miche Hill about to demonstrate book levitation to a skeptical audience. Hill points to the book's final destination at the back of the hall. (No one was hurt as the book was thrown up and flopped onto the stage.)

The Kinesis Benefit!

What can we say about this year's benefit and 20th birthday party for *Kinesis*? How about that the acts were Sandy Scofield, Sawagi Taiko, Random Acts and *Images of Whole*, a work in progress, by Siobhan Barker, Celeste Insell and Liza Huget and that that added up to three hours of music, laughs, and just downright great entertainment that kept hundreds of women and a few rambunctious children lapping their feet and smiling on a warm summer night? What can we say about having seven former and present editors of the paper wax poetic on things everyone has always wanted to know but were afraid to ask? Sometimes words just don't quite suffice.

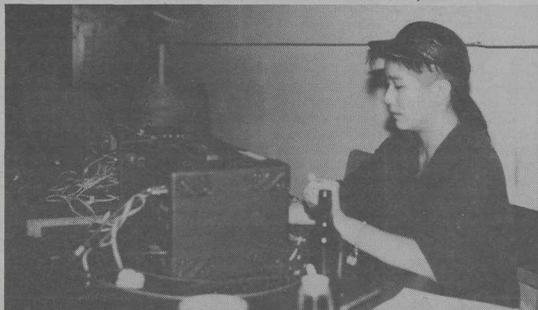
A big, rowdy thanks to everyone who organized the benefit, everyone who came out on a night when they could have done a zillion other things, and a super-special thanks to all of the volunteers who helped set up, pestered people to buy raffle tickets, sold food, worked the door, sold the brand-spanking-new *Kinesis* t-shirt and made the benefit such a success. We say it all the time but it's still true, we couldn't do it without you!



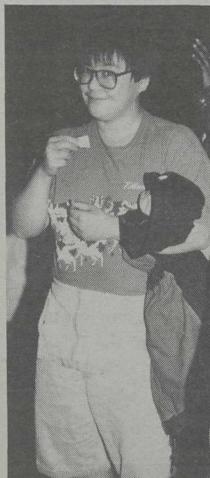
Die-hard volunteer Faith Jones wields the prize bag for excited kids.



Long-time volunteer and ex-production coordinator Marsha Arbour grins (exacto knife left at home).



Cat Renay kept the evening clear and feedback-free.



Sawagi Taiko's Leslie Komori gives a promising smile before the floor-shaking performance.



Lynne Wanyeki and Lydia Masemola flash their pearly choppers for the camera while getting some fresh air.



Nora Randall and Jackie Crossland from Random Acts and Ellen Frank: an attentive and relaxed audience.

photo by Lauren

all photos by Fatima Jaffer, except bottom centre

Interview with Nelia Sancho, Sharon Cabusao, and La Rainne Abad-Sarmiento:

Women organizing in the Philippines

as told to Agnes Huang

In May, Kinesis had the opportunity to interview three feminist activists from the Philippines. Nelia Sancho is the coordinator of the Task Force on Filipino Comfort Women, a convener of the Asian Women's Human Rights Council, and a member of the national committee of BAYAN, a coalition of multi-sectoral organizations. Sharon Cabusao is the coordinator of Gabriela—International Solidarity, a coalition of women's organizations, and a collective member of LAYA, a feminist quarterly publication in the Philippines. La Rainne Abad-Sarmiento is the coordinator of the resource centre of Isis International, and an editor with Isis International's magazine.

Agnes Huang: Nelia, could you tell us a little about your work with the Asian Women's Human Rights Council and BAYAN?

Nelia Sancho: The Asian Women's Human Rights Council's work mainly concerns implementing a series of public hearings on different forms of violations of human rights. We've finished the hearing on violence against women, mainly on the family, which was held in Lahore, Pakistan in January. The second [hearing] was in Tokyo in March, and was on the traffic in women and war crimes on Asian women. The third [hearing] is on the Dalit—the half of the two million so-called "untouchables" who are suffering from caste oppression in India. And the fourth will be public hearings on the crimes of development on Asian women, being planned for December 1994 in India.

Two other hearings are still being organized: one on indigenous women, and the other on nuclearization and the environment in the Pacific. The series of tribunals are all part of the preparatory process of defining women's human rights through actual experiences of violence or violations of Asian women. We hope to coordinate these in an international public hearing at the United Nations' World Conference on Women in Beijing in September 1995.

Huang: Will it be part of the UN Conference?

Sancho: It will be part of the NGO forum, which is the complementary activity of the official UN world conference on women. The public hearing is also meant to provide the experiences or the context by which those recommendations are tested. This will [include all of] the different issues and [women's] experiences in different continents.

The Asian Women's Human Rights Council has also supported the comfort women's struggle for redress and for human rights against the Japanese government. [Comfort women are women who were procured by the Japanese military for state-sanctioned rape by soldiers during World War Two.] It is Korean women [who] have made this a prominent issue. Women survivors have come out in the last three years from Korea to talk about the experiences [they had] more than 50 years ago. It came out that [it was] a policy of the Japanese government to draft, not only Korean women, but women from Taiwan, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and other countries the Japanese army occupied.

We got the courage to look for survivors in Indonesia, Malaysia and then in the Philippines, through the women's groups. In the Philippines, we have been able to support the coming out of 112 survivors, 46 of whom have filed lawsuits since 1993 against the Japanese government. The issue here is reclaiming women's human rights by seeking redress and justice from the Japanese government, in the form of lawsuits, in the form of the movements within each of our own countries, in the form also of international

action by the United Nations and the international community about the statement of the war crimes, of rape being used in times of war. We have formed an Asia-wide network of support for Asian comfort women.

Huang: Is there support from women activists in Japan for the work you are doing?

Sancho: Yes, the support of women activists as well as human rights lawyers in Japan is very strong.

My main work in BAYAN has been to help articulate people's issues and perspectives on varying issues of human rights. I also organize the women's desk for BAYAN to ensure education—because BAYAN is a mixed [women and men] organization—to help educate members of the issues being

In order to solve the problem of environmental degradation and deterioration, let us look at the real cause of it and not make women's fertility the scapegoat... - Nelia Sancho -

facied by Filipino women, and the role of men in confronting changes in their own selves as part of the movement for change. There is also BAYAN's children's desk, which raises awareness of the need for support systems for activists who are working full time or are being hampered in their work because of the lack of support systems for their children, [and] the BAYAN environmental concerns desk, which has formulated a people's agenda on sustainable development.

Huang: La Rainne, can you talk a bit about your work with Isis International?

La Rainne Abad-Sarmiento: Isis International is an information and communications service organization. It was transferred from Rome to Manila in 1991. Isis produces a lot of publications, and we have a resource centre with a large collection of journals, periodicals and books that have been collected since 1974. It is basically an organization that links women from the South [South to South linkages] and provides information services on various women's issues to women around the world.

Huang: Do you do a lot of work with the women's organizations in the Philippines?

Abad-Sarmiento: Yes. Some consultations especially on health networking. We are part of the committee that is spearheading the Asian regional health network.

Huang: Sharon can you talk about how you became involved in your activist work?

Sharon Cabusao: I was a student activist before I joined Gabriela in 1985, primarily involved with the student council in the State University in the Philippines. I was introduced to Gabriela, ironically by a male friend who was then involved in the peasant movement in the Philippines. My exposure to women's issues primarily came through prostitution, the bars that we went to. [My friend] introduced me to someone from Gabriela and there I became involved in various work, primarily in organizing grassroots women in slum areas in Manila, but also in supporting the economic initiatives of women in those areas, particularly working with Samakana, which is an organization of women in urban poor areas in the Philippines.

Huang: Can you talk more specifically about Gabriela itself?

Cabusao: Gabriela is a nation-wide coalition of women's organizations, primarily coming from the grassroots. It was set up by about 40 women's groups and individuals around 1984, with the objective of highlighting women's participation and women's voices in the anti-US/Marcos struggle of that time. It started as a broad coalition of women from various sectors in Philippine society, pre-dominantly middle and upper-class women.

But when the changes in the national leadership in the Philippines happened, many of the [members of] upper and middle-class women's organizations decided to join the government in various capacities

and Gabriela was left basically with its grassroots membership. It is this kind of membership which has given Gabriela the strength by which it carries out its work.

One of the main member organizations of Gabriela is called Amihan, a federation of peasant women's organizations. Samakana is the organization of urban-poor women, and the third is an organization of women industrial workers called Kalungang, an organization of women workers.

In the last two years, there have also been [member] organizations set up by indigenous women. The strongest of these is based in the north in the Cordilleras, called Inabuyog, which is an alliance of indigenous women's organizations.

Huang: I understand that in the Philippines, in the last two years, there have been three lesbian groups that have formed—in Davao, in Manila, and in Baguio. Are lesbians visible within the women's movement? Are the issues that concern lesbians, the rights of lesbians, issues of homophobia, part of the agenda of the women's movement?

Abad-Sarmiento: Very recently, yes. [Lesbians] have been active in making themselves visible. They have formed several "circles" or caucuses in the different regions. They have their own [organizations] but, at the same time, they are individual members of several organizations [that are not specifically lesbian-oriented].

Huang: You said part of the history of the women's movement has come out of the peasant women's movement, the indigenous women's movement. Is there a national organization of "progressive organizations [that are mixed]?"

Abad-Sarmiento: There isn't a big coalition to cover all the different issues, but there are particular ways in which we work [together] on connected issues. For example, among women's groups, [we are linked] around working towards the 1995 World Conference on Women in Beijing. There are now several networks that are coming together in what we call, the "Beijing process," and we have a national steering committee focussed on that work.

On specific issues, for example, Amihan would work with Kilusan Magbukid

Pilipina (KMP), a mixed organization that has to do with farmers and peasant work. There are also coalitions in the labour movements which are mixed organizations.

Cabusao: In terms of the theoretical framework which drives the women's movement and the people's movement in the Philippines, we see the struggles being waged by the women's movement, although carried out in organizationally distinct formations, as within the context of the people's movement. The fact that Gabriela is active as a public advocate of women's liberation also contributes to raising the awareness of the whole movement itself, that women's issues should be addressed alongside, interwoven, in fact, with the overall demands of people for change.

It is also expressed organizationally. For example, Gabriela is the main organizational expression, but the member organizations of Gabriela are also part of the sectoral movements that compose the people's movement. It is their role and responsibility to bring the women's agenda into the sectoral movement.

Sancho: Gabriela is also a member of BAYAN, so it gets the perspective of women into the people's issues, like the human rights or the US military bases issues. At the same time, women of BAYAN, during the congress in 1990, formulated a women's agenda within BAYAN which is supposed to be translated into different BAYAN chapters, different provinces. At the same time, there is a need for a mechanism to do that work, because the consciousness of women's issues is still low, especially among those who are not members of Gabriela. So that mechanism is supposed to assist in the implementation of the vision and agenda of women within BAYAN.

There's a need to work on women's issues within people's movements. I must say, it is not a smooth process, and it is always going to be challenging.

Huang: I'd like to move on to the issue of women's reproductive rights. In Canada, many feminists frame it as women's right to choose or to access these methods or technologies, whether we're talking about abortion or contraception. Non-plant or in-vitro fertilization or the abortion drug, RU486. Within Canada, the issue of new reproductive technologies (NRTs) is not framed as one of population control, because, although women are forced or coerced into being sterilized, it's not recognized as an overt strategy. There is also the issue of NRTs in terms of eugenics or the cloning of the genes of indigenous peoples. I understand that for women in the South, (NRTs) are strongly linked to population control policies.

Abad-Sarmiento: We also discuss [reproductive rights] in the Philippines as issues around choice and access, but it is more a question of access in the larger context of better reproductive health care services for all, especially women. Abortion is illegal. Even for us to say "legalize abortion" is a continuous struggle. We deal with access for women to adequate, appropriate, and free or affordable health care. [Our concern] is the total health of women first, basic nutrition, and then access to all other services.

In the Philippines, there is a "cafeteria" approach to contraception. This means all kinds of contraceptives are given, except the barrier methods. For example, diaphragms are not marketed. These days, condoms are much more available and being given for free because of the AIDS campaign, but [it's framed] more as the campaign against AIDS.

Sancho: More common are IUDs, and now Depo Provera.

Philippines

Abad-Sarmiento: The government says [their approach] is not a coercive approach. But again, as in many third world countries, I think the trend [is] that population control policies are imposed on the South. It is really saying that, "you people are destroying the environment, you are poor because you are so many." Of course, they're marketing [population control] in a very sophisticated and digestible manner so it's more acceptable to the public.

On the other hand, we have the Catholic church that is not only anti-abortion but is also fighting the government's policy to give [out] contraceptives. The [Church] only supports natural family planning (NFP). These are raging debates in the country, but because there are so many other problems, actually the reproductive rights issue is relegated to [the bottom of the priority list].

Sancho: I guess the challenge to us is how to bring out women's perspectives, which is separate from the government's view because they also use the words "choice" and "reproductive rights," and also from the [views of the] Church and the influence of the Vatican, which also regulates women's fertility through the imposition of only so-called natural method [of contraception]. Both views go against the whole idea of the essence of women's freedom, women's autonomy, women's self-determination to decide for themselves, for their own bodies, for their own lives. We reject both assumptions of the government and the Church.

We also would like to [look at] why they are focussing on population control—for the whole issue of the environmental [problems] they relate population growth [as the source]. But they haven't dealt with the real crux [of the problem, which is] unsustainable development—the over-consumption in the North, the abuse of resources and the wastage. The reality is, 16 units of natural resources are consumed by one billion people in the North versus four units of natural resources being used by four billion people in the South. We have to look critically into that, into how women's fertility is being targeted, in a "military" way, as the problem that has to be solved.

This will be our concern at the International Conference on Population and Development [to be held in September in Cairo]. In order to solve the problem of environmental degradation or deterioration, let us look at the real causes of it and not make women's fertility the scapegoat of the population problem.

Huang: Do you see population control policies as part of a larger strategy to maintain the International Monetary Fund-World Bank order of the world and the continued exploitation of the South?

Sancho: It is a main part of [the IMF's] development strategy. Population control policies perpetuates this idea that population growth in the South is the cause of poverty. What we are saying is that even this whole concept of population policies targets the poor in the South and particularly the poor women in the South. There are problems in the North as well, such as population reduction, zero growth, yet you impose involuntary family planning on the poor people in the North as well.

What is "choice" in the situation of poor women who aren't [in a position to give] informed consent?

Huang: I see it also in the context of the continuation of racist policies of the West. It happens in the North and the South—for example, deciding who should procreate, who should have children. These policies are targeted against the poor, they are targeted against the South, and they are targeted against

the South not just because of issues of poverty but because you are not white. Within Canada, the contradiction is that the government will acknowledge the population is [growing and] that we won't be able to support social programs as the population ages, [but then] restricts, through immigration policies, who comes to Canada, and particularly restricts people from the South.

Sancho: Yes, this is the racist migration policy on those coming from the South. What is the policy on the procreation of white women? Are they encouraging white women to bear more children?

Huang: In terms of research that goes towards new reproductive technologies in Canada, the government spends maybe \$300,000 each year to figure out what the causes of infertility are—which is the central issue. They won't acknowledge environmental or nutritional problems as they affect our reproductive systems. At the same time, the government spends \$3 million a year on research on reproductive technologies, like in-vitro fertilization (IVF) and artificial insemination. The only people who can access IVF—because it costs about \$300 every time—are wealthier women, who are mostly white.

Sancho: So in effect, it [might] also [be] a population-increase policy for whites.

Huang: I want to talk about the issue of prostitution in the Philippines. I understand one issue LAYA addresses is the debate within the feminist community about prostitution. Sharon, could you talk about this debate?

Cabusao: It is a question of how effectively we can address the issue of prostitution because it is so widespread and has been with us for many centuries. In fact, it has crossed our national boundaries, for example, with the trafficking in women. The questions are whether we want to push for the legalization of prostitution, or whether we want to refocus the criminalization of prostitution to those who are responsible for it.

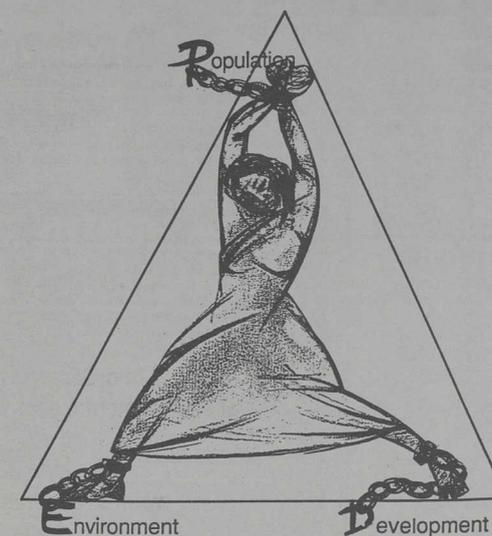
There is also a corollary question to that which is our own attitudes towards prostituted women themselves. There is still a prevalent attitude of "moralizing" the issue, or stigmatizing attitudes toward the prostituted women. It ranges from condemning the prostitutes themselves, like regarding prostitution basically as a violation of women's human rights.

On the other hand, there is the question of addressing the reality of the issue [which] forces you to deal with it in concrete terms—what do you do with the number of women who are engaged in this activity? Do you call for regulating the industry, for organizing brothels and then for also protecting the rights of individual women who are engaged in this?

Huang: When I was living in Taiwan, I learned about the indigenous people in Taiwan, the Shan Di Ren, or the mountain people. The Taiwanese government has very aggressive policies of starving indigenous people and pulling them off their land. And a lot of the young indigenous women were forced into the cities to work as prostitutes. Is that also the situation of indigenous women in the Philippines?

Sancho: In the form of mal-order brides. The former mayor of Baguio city organized a kind of "twin-city" with a Japanese city near a farmers area to arrange for marriages between the Japanese farmers and indigenous women from the Philippines.

Cabusao: There is also local trafficking of women from the more remote areas to



the main cities in the Philippines. We have reports of women from provinces in the South being brought to Manila on promises of work, but they eventually end up as sex slaves in sex houses. Going back to your earlier question, while certain disagreements are happening within the women's movement on the prostitution issue, things we agree on are that it is the institutionalization through government policies—especially sex tourism—that eventually results in the trafficking of women.

Abad-Sarmiento: We have been concerned with prostitution because of the scale [of the number] of women in the sex-trade industry. The estimate is that 400,000 to 500,000 women work in the "Rest and Recreation Industry," at the [military] bases, and in the tourist centres in the country, particularly in Manila. While our approach before was a moralistic [one] in the sense that we looked at the women as victims, gradually, through interacting with prostitutes, getting to know their aspirations, hopes, why they went into it, it dawned on us—prostitutes can be women like you and me and she, who are drawn there because of certain circumstances, because the demand side [of prostitution] is the patriarchy, and the supply side is the poverty.

So the question is how should we look at our approach towards [prostitutes]. We have to see them as equals, partners and women. Then, as a result of talks with them, the call was for how to improve their situation when they are in prostitution—like their wages, their working conditions as workers.

Cabusao: [The reason] we had to discuss prostitution is that we want to prove the relationship between poverty and gender oppression, as well as [prove] the issue of objectification of women. Those are the two main items by which we started to make ourselves more politicized in terms of gender.

I think we have to go back to it. Because before we were human rights activists talking about poverty, about violence against women in terms of militarization, but then eventually we became feminists not only [because of] discussion but experiences. It was through the issue of prostitution that we became more feminist.

Huang: Could you tell us also the link between the Miss Universe Pageant held in Manila in 1974 and again earlier this year, and the growth of prostitution and the sex tourism industry.

Sancho: We would like to say we had a very strong protest about the 1994 Miss Universe pageant. Gabriela established the link, through documentation and research, that in 1975, [the year after] the first Miss Universe pageant was organized in the Philippines, one million tourists came to the Philippines, most [of whom] were sex tourists from Japan. We established the hypothesis that there is a connection between promoting the Philippines through a beauty pageant, which promotes women as sex objects, and the coming in of tourists who perhaps think that women are "for the taking," here in the Philippines. It's as I said, there is a demand and supply side to prostitution—patriarchal demand from the North, by men in the North, and the supply side which is the [issue of women's] poverty, which also is the result of the unequal resource distribution between the North and South.

Huang: You talked about networking as Asian women and women of the South around the issue of comfort women. What about on other issues?

Cabusao: This year we will be organizing a women's international solidarity affair that focusses on women, particularly in Southern countries, and we would like to give a special emphasis to Asia. We would like to sustain the vitality of women's movements in Southern countries, to share our lessons and strategies in different aspects of women's mass movement building, but also to come up with a common agenda—to bring the Southern grassroots women networks to the coming World Conference on Women in Beijing. We are particularly inviting Southern women from social and activist movements who have very clear positions on foreign domination and the North-South imbalance. We are also inviting northern women, as long as they come from the trade union movement in their own countries and so on. [The conference is] going to be [of] discussion but experiences. It was through the issue of prostitution that we became more feminist.

Agnes Huang is a Chinese feminist activist working in community media in Vancouver.

graphic from People's Perspectives No. 2, Sept. 1993

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Review: Loreena McKennitt:

So clear, so calm, so . . .

by Shannon e. Ash

I first heard Celtic folk singer Loreena McKennitt while watching the National Film Board Studio D films *Goddess Remembered* and *The Burning Times*. Captivated by her voice and music and advised by a friend to check out her album *Parallel Dreams*, her works quickly found themselves on my list of favourites. Her next album, *The Visit*, released in 1991, sold over 500,000 copies worldwide, and won the 1992 Juno (Canadian music) Award for best Roots/Traditional Album.

McKennitt's music may be categorized as "Traditional," but it doesn't fit the traditional concept of folk music. Electric guitar and synthesizer mix with traditional instruments, and her songs are followed by works from Shakespeare or Yeats.

Her earlier works come from the well-known Celtic traditions of Ireland and England, but more recently, in *The Visit* and now in her most recent release, *The Mask and Mirror*, McKennitt has been following the roots of Celtic music and culture into the Celtic areas of France and Spain, and even further—the Celts once lived around the Mediterranean and are believed to have resided as far east as contemporary Iran.

The Mask and Mirror draws on McKennitt's research into Spain in the medieval period, particularly the 15th century, when it was a site of what she describes as "cross-cultural fertilization," where vibrant Christian, Muslim and Jewish communities influenced each other.

My first experience of McKennitt in concert was in a small, restored concert hall in Lindsay, Ontario, in 1992. It was an experience that drew me in and confirmed my

appreciation. In the past two years, McKennitt's popularity has grown—*The Mask and Mirror* is currently one of the top-selling albums in Canada.

I attended her most recent concert at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre in May, which was sponsored by the Vancouver Folk Music Festival.

Backing her, and sometimes contributing their own pieces, were accomplished musicians, all men except for cellist/keyboardist Kiki Misumi. Most of them had worked with her on *The Visit* and *The Mask and Mirror*.

I felt the Queen Elizabeth was too large a venue for her music, and therefore found it difficult to get caught up in the music. The line-up of songs was printed in the program, taking away from what I find to be the special pleasure of anticipating what piece will be played next—although it does make a reviewer's job easier. The darkened stage was artfully arrayed with candelabras and tapestries. "Very gothic," the woman who accompanied me commented.

I found the most effective pieces were the "quieter" songs, such as "Full Circle" and "She Moved Through the Fair," which centre on McKennitt at harp or piano, and the accompaniment of just one or two other musicians. Songs performed slightly differently from the recorded versions were also more engaging—for example, "Santiago," a lively tune from Galicia, a Celtic area in northwestern Spain, began with McKennitt playing the accordion slowly, her voice wonderfully emotive as she sang the wordless melody.

I never relaxed enough to fully enjoy McKennitt's performance. Besides my big-venue *anomie*, I was gripped by the strange

empathy I sometimes feel for performers on stage—when McKennitt missed a couple of verses in "Lady of Shalott," my heart almost leapt out of my chest. But the audience seemed to thoroughly enjoy the performance, and most gave her a standing ovation.

What is the appeal of McKennitt's music? Part of it may be its mixing of new and old European traditions, its eclecticism which appeals to people of diverse musical tastes. Her music is also spiritually profound, and profoundly humanist. In her account of the process of making *The Mask and Mirror*, McKennitt says, "We all have a need to understand what god is, and...we find that, and do that, in different ways."

In the song "Full Circle," McKennitt describes her witnessing of others' spiritual experiences and one of her own such experiences, linking them in simple but eloquent words and music: "Stars were falling deep in the darkness while prayers rose softly, petals at dawn And as I listened, your voice seemed so clear so calmly you were calling your god."

McKennitt often affirms the spiritual power within people and the earth in her songs. "The Two Trees," a Yeats poem which she sets to music, begins: "Beloved, gaze in thine own heart/The holy tree is growing there."

When McKennitt touches on political issues, she does so gently, appealing to emotions of compassion and loss, as in "Bonny Portmore," a traditional song about the falling of Ireland's old growth forests.

What does McKennitt's music mean to me as a feminist? It's great to see and hear a powerful female musician doing innovative work, though part of me wishes there could be even more affirmation in the work itself.

In the traditional song "The Bonny Swans," a woman is drowned by her jealous sister, while her brother is "sweet and true." The song "Dark Night of the Soul," featuring the words of the medieval Spanish mystic John of the Cross, is also beautiful, but I wish McKennitt could also bring her talents to tell of women who were mystics in medieval Europe, such as Teresa of Avila or Hildegard of Bingen. Admittedly, in much traditional European music and writing, women, if portrayed at all, are in limited roles.

McKennitt has also done the unusual in being heavily involved in the business side of her career. She released and distributed her first three albums out of her own record company, Quinlan Road. She built enough of a following that, when she negotiated a distribution deal with Warner Records, she got a good percentage on sales, and maintained her label's rights to sell albums by mail order and at concerts.

McKennitt was raised in rural Morden, Manitoba, and currently lives in Stratford, Ontario. In a recent interview, she says her upbringing influenced her to become self-reliant. "Growing up on the farm, you learn to persevere, and create things for yourself...you have to be creative how you solve [problems] if there are not the resources to buy the solution."

She adds: "I really encourage more artists to become much more active in the development of their careers...If you don't look after your best interests, other people will come along and look after it for their best interests, or they won't come along at all."

Shannon e. Ash is a very tired regular writer for Kinesis.

Powell Street Festival

by Monika Kin Gagnon

The annual Powell Street Festival, now in its 18th year, will take place on July 30 and 31 at Vancouver's Oppenheimer Park. The Festival is a cultural celebration which highlights colourful costumes and displays, demonstrations of a variety of martial arts, a wide array of foods from barbecued salmon to yakudon, music performances, storytelling and readings, to presentations of traditional *Sa-do* tea ceremonies, *ikeban* flower arranging, and *omikoshi*, the vigorous and frenzied carrying of a portable shrine essential to Japanese festivals.

Activities at Oppenheimer Park include dances, demonstrations, food stalls, craft booths and a children's tent. As well, the Festival is hosting a range of performances and screenings at the Firehall Arts Centre through the weekend, and a tribute to artist Roy Kiyooka at the Pitt Gallery on July 30 at 8 pm.

As always, there are a variety of activities geared toward children at the children's tent. Tonari Gumi will offer a number of events for kids including a scavenger hunt, *suika wari* (a game which involves trying to strike a watermelon while blindfolded), and a *kiat* contest (traditional Japanese yelling!).

While the first Festival was characterized by its presentation of mainly traditional dance, theatre and music, it now showcases a variety of contemporary visual and per-

forming arts as well as the older traditional forms with which Japanese culture is associated. This evolution from the traditional to an inclusion of contemporary forms reflects the ever-changing identity of Japanese-Canadians.

Ever present are Japanese-Canadian women, challenging the powerful stereotypes and structural social realities of submission and invisibility, which continue to face Japanese and Japanese-Canadian women. As in previous years, the organizational and administrative support for the volunteer-run Festival is comprised mostly of women, such as this year's coordinator Leslie Komori, board treasurer, Mayu Takasaki, and current board president Cathy Makihara.

This year's contributions by Japanese-Canadian women promise to be impressive. Samsel (third generation Japanese-Canadian) video artist, Ruby Truly, will have two works screened on July 30 at 12:30 pm at the Firehall Theatre. In the one-minute-long video *Making Fire*, Truly tells the story of her grandfather and his life as an immigration worker in Hawaii. *With Our Own Eyes* recounts the Lemon Creek Reunion bus trip of 1991, which toured former internment campsites in the BC interior.

Also on July 30 at the Firehall Theatre at 2:30 pm, the festival will screen Japanese American Rea Tajiri's video *Yuri Kochiyama: Passion for Justice*. A featured guest this

year, Yuri Kochiyama, a Nisei (second generation Japanese American) activist from New York City, will be present to answer questions. Tajiri's video chronicles the unrecorded history of this remarkable woman's contribution toward social change through some of the most significant events of the 20th century. Following her interment as a young woman in a World War 2 concentration camp, Kochiyama's involvements have included working with Malcolm X and the Black Liberation Movement, the worldwide disarmament movement and the International Political Prisoner Rights Movement. Her life work offers a unique glance back at past struggles in human rights and an inspiring glimpse at the possibilities ahead.

Also performing on July 30 at the park grounds will be Sawagi Taiko, an all-women drum group which challenges the Japanese tradition of taiko players being predominantly men. In North America, male taiko



A young performer at last year's Powell Street Festival

photo by Tamio Wakayama

players outnumber women about three to one. In mixing taiko, theatre, poetry, voice and movement, Sawagi Taiko describe themselves as creating a unique Asian feminist expression where the power comes from having fun and causing a commotion.

Most activities take place on the Oppenheimer Park Ground stages, from 11:30 am to 7:00 pm on July 30 and 31. For program schedules and further information, call the Powell Street Festival office at 682-4335.

BULLETIN BOARD

read this

Bulletin Board listings have a maximum of 50 words. Groups, organizations and individuals eligible for free space in the Bulletin Board must be, or have, non-profit objectives.

Other free notices will be items of general public interest and will appear at the discretion of *Kinesis*.

Classifieds are \$8 (+\$0.56 GST) for the first 50 words or portion thereof, \$4 (+\$0.28 GST) for each additional 25 words or portion thereof and must be prepaid.

Deadline for all submissions is the 18th of the month preceding publication. Note: *Kinesis* is published ten times a year. Jul/Aug and Dec/Jan are double issues.

All submissions should include a contact name and telephone number for any clarification that may be required.

Listings will not be accepted over the telephone.

Kinesis encourages readers to research the goods and services advertised in Bulletin Board. *Kinesis* cannot guarantee the accuracy of the information provided or the safety and effectiveness of the services and products listed.

Send submissions to Bulletin Board, *Kinesis*, #301-1720 Grant Street, Vancouver, BC, V5L 2Y6. For more information call 255-5499.

EVENTS

WANNA GET INVOLVED?

With *Kinesis*? We want to get involved with you too. Help plan our next issue. Come to the Writer's meeting on **Aug 2, 8pm** at our office, 301-1720 Grant St, Vancouver. If you can't make the meeting, call 255-5499. No experience is necessary, all women welcome.

VSW WANTS YOU!

Want to get more involved but not sure where to begin? Join us—become a volunteer at Vancouver Status of Women. VSW volunteers plan events, lead groups, raise funds, answer the phone lines and help to connect women with the community resources they need, organize the library and other exciting tasks! Come to the committee meetings: Finance/Fundraising, **Tues, Jul 19, 8:30 am**. The next volunteer polluck and orientations will be on **Wed, Jul 20, and Thurs, Aug 18 at 7 pm** at VSW, 301-1720 Grant St. For more info, call Jennifer at 255-5511.

POLITICAL ACTION GROUP

The next Women of Colour and First Nations Women's Political Action Group meets once a month. For more info please call Miche at 255-5511.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT SUPPORT GROUP

Meets twice a month at the VSW, 301-1720 Grant St. For more info, call Miche at 255-5511.

PROOFREADERS WANTED

Volunteer proofreaders are needed for VSW's 1994 edition of the *Single Mother's Resource*

EVENTS

Guide soon to be out. Whether you are a Single mom or not you can help update the guide by proofing material before the guide goes to press. If you have a little time to spare and want to contribute to this Single Mothers' project call Carol or Miche at 255-5511 or drop into VSW, 301-1720 Grant St, Van before **Jul 15**.

FEMINIST NETWORKING

Meets once a month. Call Miche for more info at 255-5511.

VIDEOS ON VIOLENCE

Two video documentaries from the Women and Mental Health Assoc on the Women in a Violent Society Conference held in Banff 1991, will be shown **Tues, Jul 12** from 8-10pm, at La Quena, 1111 Commercial Dr. A discussion to follow. For more info, call 872-2480.

LESBIAN AND GAY FILM FEST

Out On Screen is holding its sixth annual Lesbian and Gay Film and Video Festival **Jul 19-23**. This year's festival will coincide with the Pride Committee's month of pride commemorating the 25th anniversary of the Stonewall riots. Screenings will be held at the Video In, 1965 Main St and the Pacific Cinematheque, 1131 Howe St. The venues are wheelchair accessible. Childcare subsidies are available. For more info, call 685-1159.

LESBIAN FESTIVAL

The 5th Annual Northampton Lesbian Festival will be held **Jul 22-24** in Northampton, Massachusetts. Tickets include concerts, workshops, crafts area, swimming, tennis, F&B Cafe and performance art, but not food

EVENTS

and camping. Tickets are available through the Northampton Box Office, (413) 586-8686 or 1-800-The-Tick. For directions or info on access, camping, accommodations or work exchange, call the WOW info line (413) 582-3969 or (413) 582-9069.

JAPANESE-CANADIAN ARTISTS

Japanese-Canadian artists from BC and Alberta are invited to attend *Gatherings*, a two day symposium in Vancouver in September on art, community and Japanese-Canadian identity. Pre-registration required, fee \$25. Partial travel and accommodation subsidies available. For applications or more info, tel or fax Mleko Amano (604) 298-5424. Applications must be mailed to *Gatherings*, 4640 Brentlawn Ave, Burnaby, BC V5C 3V2 postmarked no later than **Jul 29**.

ANNIVERSARY READINGS

The Vancouver Women's Bookstore is celebrating its 21st anniversary with a reading by Caroline Aderson and Carmen Rodriguez **Sat, Jul 23** at 8pm at the Native Education Centre, 285 East 5th Ave.

POLESTAR READINGS

Polestar Press presents readings by authors Brenda Brooks (*Somebody Should Kiss You, Blue Light In The Dash*) and Candis Graham (*Tea For Thirteen, Imperfect Moments*), **Wed, Jul 6, 8pm** in Vancouver at Women in Print, 3566 West 4th Ave, and **Sun, Jul 10** at 3pm in Victoria at Everywoman's Books, 635 Johnson St. Brooks and Graham will also be reading with Cherie Geavreau (*Even The Fawn Has Wings*) on Saltspring Island at the Waterside Cafe in Ganges, on **Thurs, Jul 7**

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Pacific Cinematheque, Tuesday, July 19, 9:30 pm
Dare to see the funny side and laugh out loud - includes *Chicks in White Satin*.

PROFILE: PRATIBHA PARMAR

Video In, Wednesday, July 20, 9 pm
British-based South Asian artist Pratibha Parmar is known for her groundbreaking work and her dedication to giving a defiant voice and a striking image to the often unseen and unspoken realities of women throughout the world. This profile includes *Double the Trouble, Emergence, Sari Red and Khush*. ASL Intrepreters present this evening.

GENDER TROUBLEMAKERS

Video In, Thursday, July 21, 7 pm
A challenging program exploring the lived reality of transgender identity and experience from the perspectives of female to male and male to female transsexuals.

SEX FISH

Video In, Friday, July 22, 9 pm
Excess, desire and dykes! A collection of lush work that will tease, please, challenge, confuse, and slide you right off your seat. An enticingly delicious feast for the eyes.

IT'S A FAMILY AFFAIR!

Video In, Saturday, July 23, 7 pm
An eclectic collection of shorts which expands the definition of "family".

TWO VOICES: BEYOND LOSS

Video In, Sunday, July 24, 1 pm
Two tapes in two voices take on love, friendship and living with breast cancer and AIDS.

FOR TICKETS CALL CBO AT 280-2801 OR 1-800-665-5454

Made possible by the generous sponsorship of Video In, *Angles, Xtral West* & funding from the City of Vancouver

ARE BODIES OUR SELVES?

Video In, Thursday, July 21, 7pm
Work insisting on thoughtful and visceral consideration of how our perceived bodies inform the psyches, identities and sexualities of ourselves and others. (Still from *The Body Beautiful*)



BULLETIN BOARD

EVENTS

at 8pm. For more info, contact Polestar Press at 251-9718.

DENISE CHONG

Venus Chong will read from *The Concubine's Children*, her memoir about her search for her roots in China on **Wed, Aug 10** at 7:30pm at Women in Print, 3566 West 4th Ave. For more info, call 732-4128.

VENUS ENVY

Venus Envy, a 4-wimmin band from Seattle who write and sing songs about lesbian and women's issues, will perform **Fri, Jul 8** at 9pm at the York Theatre, 639 Commercial Dr. Venus Envy features Lisa Koch, well known as one half of the comedy duo Dos Fallopia. Tickets \$9-\$18 available at Little Sisters, BookMantel and Women in Print. Advance tickets advised. For more info, 253-7189 or 684-2633.

UNN CELEBRATION

Aboriginal "Variety Night" is a celebration of the 25th anniversary of the United Native Nations at the Vogue Theatre **Jul 22 & 23** at 7pm. Performers will include Waseksu, Spirit Song, Art Napoleon, Sen'klip Native Theatre. Tickets are available through CBO 684-1234. For more info, call 873-1914.

ROCK AGAINST PRISONS

Rock Against Prisons is a free outdoor concert for Prison Justice Day to be held on **Sat, Aug 6**, noon-6pm, at Grandview Park (next to Britannia Community Centre). Live bands, speakers, food, info tables & more. Rain or Shine! For more info call 251-7240.

EVENTS

SOCIAL POLICY REVIEW

The Women's Social Policy Review Coalition is holding a conference in Vancouver on the attack on social programs **Jul 22-24** at 1495 West 8th Ave. The Coalition is a network of women and women's groups committed to working for social programs that will benefit women. For more info, call 730-9243 or 730-9306.

JOAN HAGGERTY

Joan Haggerty will read from her memoir, *The Invitation*, **Wed, Jul 27** at 7:30pm at Women in Print, 3566 West 4th Ave. *The Invitation* is the story of Haggerty's experience giving up her second child for adoption. For more info call 732-4128.

STARHAWK

Starhawk, witch, political activist, ecofeminist, will talk on *Ecofeminism: Living In Community With The Earth*, **Jul 22**, 8 pm, to be followed by a Spiral Dance. Partial proceeds go to the Claycoot Sound Defense Fund. Sliding Scale tickets \$10-\$20 available at Women in Print and BookMantel. For info on event location, call Pat 253-7189.

VANCOUVER FOLK FEST

The 17th annual Vancouver Folk Music Festival is hosting over 200 performers from more than 15 countries **Jul 16-17** at Jericho Beach Park. Be sure to watch out for Mo Field, Tammy Fassaert, Veda Hille, Derivative Duo, Ani DiFranco, Pamela Morgan, Penny Lang, Quartette and Claudia Schmidt—just to name a few! For tickets or more info, call 879-2931.

MICHIGAN!!!

The 1994 Michigan Womyn's Music Fest runs **Aug 9-14**, featuring thousands of womyn on 650 acres of secluded woodland. Performers include Lucie Blue Tremblay, Toshi Reagon, Lillian Allen & Karen Williams, plus intensive workshops. **Jul 16** is the postmark deadline for advance ticket purchase. For tickets, write to the WWTMC, Box 22, Wadhalla, MI 49458.

EARTHY PLEASURES

Earthy Pleasures, a visual arts exhibit curated by Larissa Lai, will run at the grunt gallery until **Jul 9**. Local East and South Asian women artists talk about pleasures of the moment and in memory, beginning to explore territory still in the process of reclamation. The grunt gallery is at 209 East 6th Ave. For more info, call 875-9516.

SYLVIE READMAN

Sylvie Readman's art exhibition, *Champs d'eclipses* will continue at Presentation House Gallery, 333 Chesterfield Ave, North

EVENTS

Vancouver until **Jul 24**. Gallery hours are Wed to Sun, 12-5pm, Thurs, 12-9 pm.

CARIBBEAN DAYS

The Trinidad & Tobago Culture Society is hosting a two-day Caribbean festival, **July 23 & 24**, at Waterfront Park in North Vancouver. Authentic Caribbean entertainment, including many live bands, crafts, and food. For more info call 876-7110

GRRRL PRIDE PARTY

Grrrls-only Pride Party **Sat, Jul 30**, 10pm at the New York Theatre, 639 Commercial Drive. Tickets available at the BookMantel and Little Sisters. For more info 623-9361.

HARRISON FESTIVAL

The Harrison Festival of the Arts, **Jul 9-17**, is a celebration of world music, theatre, dance and visual arts. A relaxed, intimate and affordable Festival in beautiful Harrison Hot Springs. Featuring the music of Mother Tongue, Casselberry-DuPree, Melanie DeMore, Black Umfolosi (Zimbabwe) and many more. Gina Bastone and Calvin Cairns in *Suzy & Uncle Joe*, a large art exhibit, an art market, *Festival in a Day* and a series of discussions on relevant social issues. For more info, call 796-3664 or in Vancouver, 681-2771.

A QUESTION OF VOICE

The Harrison Festival presents a one day forum on the debate surrounding cultural appropriation. Participants will share and exchange ideas on the topic of cultural appropriation and its effects on the arts community as a whole. Facilitator: Sal Ferreras, guests: Lorena Gale, Yasmin Jiwani, Marjorie MacLean, Haruko Okano and Beverly Yhap. **Fri, Jul 15**. For more info, call 796-3664 or in Vancouver, 681-2771.

BLACK UMFOLOSI

The Harrison Festival presents a full length concert with Zimbabwe's Black Umfolosi, **Fri, Jul 15**, 8:30pm. The first half of their show features traditional Zulu war dances, and the second half the serene beauty of a cappella singing in the imbube style. No other group on the world music scene can match Black Umfolosi for the versatility, athleticism, harmony and the sheer energy which goes into their performance. For info, call 796-3664 or in Vancouver, 681-2771.

FEMINIST BOOK FAIR

The 6th *International Feminist Book Fair* takes place in Melbourne, Australia from **Jul 27-31**. The theme of the Book Fair is "Indigenous, Asian and Pacific Writing and Pub-

EVENTS

lishing." The first two days are trade only and the last three days are open to the public.

HOME SWEET HOME

Carlos Bulcson Cultural Workshop presents *Home Sweet Home*, a play about violence against women in the Filipino community, **Fri, Jul 8** and **Sat, Jul 9**, 7:30 pm, at the Judge White Theatre, Robson Square Conference Centre, 800 Robson St. Tickets \$5. For more info, call 325-9303, 222-1897, 879-0070 or 876-4012.

WORKSHOP ON VIOLENCE

A workshop with the Filipino community on violence against women will be held **Sun, Jul 10**, 1:30-5:00 pm, in the Lounge Room, Mt Pleasant Community Centre, 3161 Ontario St. Admission is free. For more info, call 325-9303, 222-1897, 879-0070 or 876-4012.

GROUPS

THE LESBIAN AVENGERS

The Lesbian Avengers is a direct action group focussed on issues vital to lesbian survival and visibility. This group originated in New York, and has become an international organization. Meetings are **Jul 8 & 22** and **Aug 12 & 26** at the V.L.C. 876 Commercial Drive at 7:30. For more info, call 688-WEST ext 2005, or the Lesbian Avenger Hotline 268-9614.

READING FOR CHILDREN

An invitation to all who are interested in reading with children. A weekly reading circle is starting at the Family Activity Room, Britannia Community Centre, 1661 Napier St. The meetings will be held on **Sat** at 11am. Bring your children and/or volunteer to be a "book buddy". For more info, call 253-4391 1oc.25. Drop-ins welcome.

LESBIAN BATTERING

Lesbians abusing other lesbians is not new—doing something about it is. A two day conference is in being planned for mid-October, sponsored in part by International Lesbian Week. Conference organizers are looking for lesbians willing to assist in planning, facilitating workshops, acting as support workers, offering child care, etc. For more info, call Anna or Mary c/o The BookMantel, 1002 Commercial Dr.

MATURE LESBIANS

Are you starting or continuing the coming out process? Are you looking for friendship and support? Come out and join us for lunch, and help us plan some social activities. Call Geri at 278-8497 evenings.

VANCOUVER PRIDE SOCIETY

The Vancouver Pride Society, organizers of the annual Pride Parade on **Aug 1**, announce that lesbian groups and organizations wishing to enter the parade are eligible for a partial rebate on the entry fee. Entry fees are lower if paid before **Jul 15**. Pride Parade registration forms can be obtained at the BookMantel, 1002 Commercial Dr, the GLC, or by calling 684-3633.

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GROUPS

VANCOUVER LESBIAN CONNECTION

Groups currently running are **Suns** 7-9pm Youth Group; **Mons** 7-9pm Ki Connections; **Weds** 7-9pm ACOA; 1st and 3rd Fri 7:30-9:30pm Over 30's Social Group; 1st and 3rd Sat 6-9 pm Writers Group.

DAWN BC

The DisAbleD Women's Network of Vancouver is holding monthly meetings for all disabled women interested in meeting other disabled women for support and information sharing. Meetings are held on the **second Sun** of the month from 2-4pm at the Vancouver Housing Registry, 501 East Broadway. For info, call 253-6620.

HIV POSITIVE WOMEN

The Oak Tree Clinic, a new care centre for HIV positive women and children has opened its doors and is accepting new clients. Its focus is the care of women and children who are HIV positive. To make an appointment to see a doctor or counsellor, call 875-2212.

LESBIAN SOCIAL GROUP

A Bunch Of Lesbians (ABOL) social evening every **Wed** 7:30 pm at the Gay and Lesbian Centre, 1170 Bute St. Open to all lesbians. Guest speakers, discussions, videos, special events.

POSITIVE WOMEN

The Positive Women's Network in Vancouver has formed a Women's HIV Caucus to provide a time and place for HIV positive women to discuss advocacy issues. For women who would like to get involved in the causes, but don't want to lose their confidentiality, there is the option of phone conferencing. For more info, please contact Carla at the PWN, 893-2200.

MAPLE RIDGE LESBIANS

The Lesbians and Gays of Maple Ridge Social Group hold monthly potlucks, brunches, games etc. New to the community? You are welcome here. Call 467-9566.

VALLEY WOMYN

If you would like to meet other lesbians, gays or bis and you live in the Abbotsford area, you are invited to call, Friends in the Valley at 853-7184 or write to Box 8000-591, Abbotsford V2S 6H1.

MENOPAUSE SUPPORT

A Menopause Support Group in Edmonton meets every **third Wed** of the month at 7:30 at the Royal Alexandra Hospital-Women's Centre in the Out Patient Diabetic Clinic. For info call 939-3699.

SUBMISSIONS

WOMEN'S REEL VISION

Women's Reel Vision will be hosting the Reel Life Film and Video Festival on **Oct 27-30** in Halifax. The festival will include 4 days of videos and films, workshops, and a community video info exchange room. Women are

SUBMISSIONS

encouraged to submit documentary, video art, animation, experimental and dramatic works. For a submission entry form, write to: Women Reel Vision Collective c/o Karen Vance-Wallace, P.O. Box 36035, Halifax, NS B3J 3S9. Tel (902) 435-6319. Deadline is **Jul 31**.

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

Canadian Woman Studies/les Cahiers de la Femme, Winter 94 issue will explore women's entrepreneurial skills. Invited are essays, research reports, true stories, poetry, cartoons, drawings and other artwork which address the experience of entrepreneurial women living in Canada as well as around the world. Deadline is **Aug 30**. Write or call as soon as possible indicating your intention to submit work. *Canadian Woman Studies*, 212 Founders College, York University, 4700 Keele St, North York, Ont, M3J 1P3 Canada. Women Studies; tel (416) 736-5356; or fax (416) 736-5900 (ext 55356).

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

The Winter 95 issue of *Canadian Woman Studies/les Cahiers de la Femme* will explore women's rights as human rights. This issue will bring together articles from around the world that will analyze the gender dimensions of basic human rights concepts. Invited are essays, research reports, true stories, poetry, cartoons, drawings and other artwork. Deadline is **Nov 30, 1994**. Write or call as soon as possible indicating your intention to submit your work. *Canadian Woman Studies*, 212 Founders College, York University, 4700 Keele St, North York, Ont, M3J 1P3; tel (416) 736-5356; or fax (416) 736-5700 (ext 55356).

CALL FOR POETRY

Contemporary Verse 2 welcomes your poetry submissions on the themes of Letters, Women & Nature, First Nations and Women loving Women. Deadline is **Aug 15**. We also encourage submissions on other topics. Write to CV2 Editorial Collective, PO Box 3062, Winnipeg, R3C 4E5; tel (204) 949-1365. For guidelines send SASE. CV2 pays for work published.

ST. JOHN'S FILM FEST

The St John's International Women's Film and Video Festival is seeking submissions from filmmakers and distributors for their 5th annual festival in **mid-Oct**. To be eligible, the production must be woman-authored, either as the writer, director, or producer. The festival is interested in any film or video, made in the last two years, that is thought-provoking, passionate, or playful. Deadline is **Jul 15**. For a submission form, write St. John's Women's Film & Video Festival, PO Box 984, St. John's, Newfoundland, A1C 6C2, or fax (709) 772-4808 or tel (709) 772-0358.

SATANIC ABUSE ANTHOLOGY

There is a call for first person stories of survivors of Satanic abuse, their friends and families as well as stories of abuse that occurred under non-Satanic ideologies. Please contact Jeanne Marie Lorena, RA

SUBMISSIONS

Speak Out, 4104 24th St, #127, San Francisco, CA 94114, USA.

FOCUS ON YOUTH

The Center for Feminist Research and the Center for Refugee Studies at York University are calling for papers for an international workshop **Mar 6-8, 1995** entitled, *Women's Rights are Human Rights: Focus on Youth*. A principal purpose of the workshop is to establish a deeper understanding of issues concerning young women. Papers may be written and presented in either French or English. Abstracts (100 words) are invited. Deadline is **Sep 1**. Send to Farhana Mather, Center for Feminist Research, York Lanes, York University, 4600 Keele St, North York, Ont, M3J 1P3; Tel (416) 736-2100 ext 20560; or fax (416) 736-5837.

CHILDREN'S STORIES AWARD

The National Council of Canadian Filipino Associations announces the NCCFA Award for "Outstanding Philippine Canadian Children's Literature". Details of the awards, which are open to Canadians of Filipino origin aged 12 to 20, can be obtained by writing the National Council at 5139 bou Decarie, bureau 220, Montreal, Quebec, H3W 3C2. Next awards will be given in Sep 1996.

WOMEN OF COLOUR

Sister Vision Press is inviting women of colour to submit poetry, stories or journal entries on experiences of incest and sexual abuse for a new anthology. Deadline is **Oct 1**. Please send hard copy or work on IBM disk with SASE to Sister Vision Press, PO Box 217 Stn E, Toronto, Ont, M6H 4E2.

LESBIAN MOTHERHOOD

There is a call for papers for a book on lesbian motherhood/parenthood to be published by gender books in the spring of 1995. Articles by native lesbians and two-spirited women, lesbians of colour and disabled lesbians are especially encouraged. Articles should be no longer than 20 pages and can be on a variety of topics. Please send proposals to Professor Katherine Arnp, School of Canadian Studies, Carleton University, 1125 Colonel By Dr, Ottawa, Ont, K1S 5B6.

LESBIAN LAND ANTHOLOGY

There is a call for material for a *Lesbian Land Culture Anthology*, edited by Nett Hart and Jean Mountingrove and published by Word Weavers. Work is sought that reflects the innovations and adaptations lesbians make in their relation with the land. Both lesbians who have never published and who frequently publish are encouraged to make submissions. Send SASE for guidelines to Word

SUBMISSIONS

Weavers, PO Box 8742, Minneapolis MN 55408. Deadline is **Oct 1**.

BLACK GIRL TALK

We are young Black women, age 14 to 24 years, who want to talk, to write, to hear each other. Here's your chance to join us and publish your thoughts. We want: poetry, stories, journal entries, photographs, drawings. Themes: family, relationships, friends, sex, love, racism, religion, sexuality, politics. Deadline is **Sep 15**. Send your work to: Black Girl Talk, Sister Vision Press, PO Box 217, Stn E, Toronto, Ont, M6H 4E2. For more info, call (416) 533-2184.

WOMEN, WAR AND PEACE

Women, War and Peace: The Vision and the Strategies—an international conference of Women in Black, and women's peace movements—will be held in Jerusalem from **Dec 29-31**. Women from women's peace movements throughout the world are invited to share their experience in an activist conference that will include discussions, workshops, a mass vigil and march through Jerusalem. Both activists and scholars are invited. Those interested in presenting, please indicate your subject and preferred format (workshop, panel, etc.) and contact Erella Shadmi, 4/11 Dresner St, Jerusalem, Israel 93814, Tel: (2) 718-597; Fax: (2) 259-626.

LESBIAN CONTRADICTION

Lesbian Contradiction: A Journal of Irrelevant Feminism is looking for submissions of non-fiction accounts and reflections from women who have had experience struggling against efforts by the Far Right to take power by making lesbians, gays, and women pawns in their hate campaigns. This feature is ongoing in 1994 and 1995. Les Con, #365-84 Castro St, San Francisco, CA 94114.

LESBIAN SEX ANTHOLOGY

Women's Press is looking for poems, stories, fantasies, and realities from lesbians of diverse backgrounds for this anthology, exploring the whole range of lesbian sex. Submissions must be no longer than 5,000 words, and should include a one paragraph bio and a business sized SASE. Send Submissions to *Lesbian Sex Anthology* c/o Women's Press, #233-517 College St, Toronto, Ont, M6G 4A2. Deadline is **Aug 31**.

CRIAW GRANTS

The Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women offers annual grants of \$2,500 for projects that promote the advancement of women. The project must make a significant contribution to feminist research and be non-sexist in methodology and lan-



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BULLETIN BOARD

SUBMISSIONS

guage. Priority will be given to emerging independent researchers, women's groups, and projects with Canadian content. Candidates should send four copies of their application, and submissions must be postmarked no later than **Aug 31**, and sent to CRIAW, 151 Slater St, Ottawa, Ont, K1P 5H3.

SISTER VISION ANTHOLOGY

Sister Vision Press is calling for submissions to the *First International Anthology of Lesbian and Gay People of African Descent*. Sister Vision is seeking testimonies, short stories, essays, photographs, recipes, illustrations, interviews, and poetry crossing boundaries of culture, language, geography, history, identity and gender. Deadline is **Nov 30**. Send submissions to Sister Vision, PO Box 217, Stn E, Toronto, Ont, M6H 4E2.

A FRIEND INDEED AWARD

\$5,000(US) will be awarded to the person(s) who demonstrate(s) innovation in studies about or services to women in menopause. Nominations should be sent to Janine O'Leary Cobb, A Friend Indeed Publications Inc, 3575 boul St. Laurent, Suite 402, Montreal, PQ, H2X 2T7 by **Jul 31**.

FAT-POSITIVE WRITINGS

Writing and art sought for inclusion in big, fat anthology which will give visibility and voice to the wide diversity of life experience and stories of fat lesbians. Preference will be given to non-fiction and personal reflective writings. Contributions from fat dyke social or organizing groups are also encouraged. Mev Miller, P.O. Box 300151, Minneapolis, MN, 55403. Deadline is **Nov 1**.

IDENTITY

A call for submissions for the anthology, *...But where are you really from: Writings on Identity and Assimilation in Canada*. Essays, personal narratives, articles, commentaries and poetry are wanted which will examine issues around identity and assimilation in Canadian society. Submit in duplicate with a SASE to Hazelle Palmer c/o Sister Vision Press, 19-1666 Queen St E, Toronto, Ont, M4L 1G3. Tel: (416) 691-5749. Deadline is **Nov 30**.

CLASSIFIEDS

THE RAMAYANA RETOLD

The Public Dreams Society has created *The Ramayana: A South Asian Story and Shadow Play Activity Resource* for educators of children. The package includes a storyline, cultural and historical information, ten shadow puppets, complete instructions for puppet and stage construction, and helpful tips for educators and new puppeteers. This pack-

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age will be available in Sept. For more info, call 879-8611.

SEXUAL HEALING

Healing of abuses, abortions, fear and anger around sex. This gentle bodywork will help you go deep into the traumas and release the charges caught in the body itself. Recapture your ability to experience guilt-free flowing sexual energy with the one you love. Call Almasta at 224-4655

HOUSING WANTED

Two quiet, mature, non-smoking women moving from Halifax with two equally quiet, mature, and non-smoking cats are looking for a bright 2-3 bedroom house or flat in Vancouver near transit. We're highly responsible and used to living in a women's community. References. We'll be arriving the first week of Sept. \$900-\$1,000/month. Phone or fax 902-455-0185--Betty-Ann or Brenda. Call Collect.

PEER COUNSELLOR TRAINING

Battered Women's Support Services will be offering Group Facilitator, Peer Counsellor/ Advocate training in the fall of this year. If you are interested in working with battered women as a volunteer at BWSS and would like to be considered for the training program, call 687-1868 for an application form. We look forward to hearing from you. Deadline for application is **Fri, Sep 2**.

THERAPEUTIC ALLIANCE

Counselling and therapy using an integrative and eclectic approach in order to explore the individual's conflict and distress within the social context in which this occurs, such as adoption and fostering; racism and anti-semitism; heterosexism; etc. For an appointment, please call Sangam Grant at 253-5007.

GENERAL PRACTITIONER

Joan Robillard, MD, General Practitioner for all kinds of families is located at 308-2902 W Broadway, Van, V6K 2G8, phone 736-3582.

SHIATSU WITH A DIFFERENCE

For pain relief, stress management or as a complement to therapy, Astarte's focus on body-awareness will help you gain insight and tools to further your healing process. Call Astarte Sands 251-5409.

COWGIRLS 'N GHOST TOWNS

Winter holiday for lesbians. Come this winter to sunny and warm Arizona. Travel by van with a small group of cowgirls like yourself to see Arizona's Old West, ghost towns, Spanish missions, Native American



photo courtesy of the Vancouver Folk Music Festival

ANI DIFRANCO

Singer, poet and performer, ani difranco will be among the many women performing at this year's Vancouver Folk Music Festival, **Sat, July 16 and Sun, July 17** at Jericho Beach Park. For ticket information and full program schedule, contact the Folk Fest, 879-2931. ani difranco will also performing in Nelson, BC on **Mon, July 18** at 8pm at the Capitol Theatre. Tickets are \$10-15 and are available from Book Garden, Packrat Annie's, Localmotion, and the Nelson Women's Centre. For more information, call 322-9916.

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ruins, spectacular scenery, and the cultural legacy of Mexico. Arizona's southern neighbour. Tour includes accommodations in upscale or historic hotels, horseback ride and cook-out, Sedona jeep tour, and "Welcome to Arizona" reception with local lesbians. Eight departures Nov-Feb. A special invitation is extended to Canadian lesbians, Out'n Arizona Dept. 215 POB 22333, Tempe, AZ, USA 85285. Tel: (800) 897-0304.

FIRST NATIONS HEALING CENTRE

The Professional Native Women's Association is looking for First Nations volunteers and resource people to share their abilities and gifts through the First Nations Community Healing Centre. PNWA encourages elders, traditional healers, medicine people, facilitators, speakers, holistic practitioners and resource people to contact Pat Forrest at 873-1833 or fax 872-1845.

POWELL STREET

Organizers of the 18th annual Powell Street Festival are looking for participants and volunteers for this year's festival, **Jul 30-31** at Oppenheimer Park, 400 Powell St (between Jackson and Dunlevy). Powell Street is a celebration of Japanese-Canadian art, music, and performance. If you are of Japanese descent and would like to par-

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ticipate in the festival, or if you wish to volunteer--all peoples of any ancestry are welcome, especially those interested in stage work--call the Powell Street Festival office, 682-4335.

NATIVE CRISIS LINE

Women of Native heritage are needed to volunteer on the Professional Native Women's Association's 24 hour crisis/counselling line. A certificate of completion will be awarded upon completion of training. Contact Patti Pettigrew at PNWA 873-1833, or fax 872-1845.

SUMMER LEGAL CLINIC

Battered Women's Support Services and UBC Law Students Legal Advice Program are co-sponsoring free legal clinics for women **Weds, 2-8pm** until **Aug 17**. For more info or to make an appointment, call BWSS at 687-1867.

WEST COAST LEAF RAFFLE

The West Coast Women's Legal Education and Action Fund is holding its annual raffle. Prizes include a trip for 2 to San Francisco and 2 nights at the Cathedral Lake Lodge. Tickets are \$5 or 5 for \$20. Draw date is **Sep 9**. To purchase raffle tickets, call 684-8772.

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