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Special Collections Serial

KINESIS

News About Women That's Not In The Dailies

Special report: Women and HIV/AIDS

INSIDE

KINESIS

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Kinesis welcomes volunteers to work on all aspects of the paper. Our next Writers' Meeting is **Tues, Sep 3** and **Tues Oct 1**, 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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FRONT COVER
XI International AIDS Conference: *Left to right back:* Karen Lyons (US), Sonia Lawless (Australia), Susan Chang (Malaysia); *left to right front:* Sandra Falkner (US) and Nancy Pang (Canada). 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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Want to see those issues in these pages?
Come to one of our next Story Meetings
Tues September 3rd and October 1st
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AS KINESIS

goes to press

As *Kinesis* goes to press, summer is winding down, but a lot more is winding up...Take, for instance, all the discussion and debate around women's reproductive rights. Lately, the dailies have been filled with stories of frozen embryos, selective abortions, women carrying eight foetuses, courts ordering pregnant women into drug treatment centres, and "lesbians giving birth to quadruplets." [No, this wasn't on the cover of some supermarket tabloid.]

In days past, the main issue concerning reproductive rights was abortion. Nowadays, the right to choose is more complex and involves things such as, in vitro fertilization, surogacy, and genetic testing.

Given all this, it is particularly critical for feminists to clarify our analysis of NRTs and related issues. In upcoming issues, *Kinesis* will publish feminist debate on some of these issues.

Back on the issue of abortion...it appears that women who've had abortions are no longer welcome in the Roman Catholic Church (surprise, surprise.) Archbishop Adam Exner, the highest church official in BC, lashed out that such women should be excommunicated.

Ironically (or is that, hypocritically,) just a week later, after one of his bishops, Hubert O'Connor, was convicted of the sexual and indecent assault of two Aboriginal women, Exner pleaded that O'Connor should be forgiven because "he had suffered enough." Excommunication certainly was not on the tip of Exner's tongue, nor was any apology on O'Connor's.

More hypocrisy to report...last month, David Dingwall told women at the Canada -US Women's Health Conference in Ottawa that women's organizations should work with business to figure out strategies (i.e. raise money) for ending violence against women. Why? Because women can't expect the federal government to carry the financial "burden" of violence against women.

Dingwall also suggested the government may not renew the $120 million (over five years) family violence initiative.

Dingwall did agree to look into legislation that would require drug companies to use women as research subjects when testing their drugs. The US also recently brought in similiar legislation. Women have been excluded from drug trials because of the variability of our bodies; i.e. that we menstruate, get pregnant and go through menopause. This has often meant that women have had unexpected adverse reactions to drugs because they've never been tested on us.

On another note, there's good news on the women's health front: a new women's health newsletter has hit the scene. The bimonthly *Canadian Women's Health Network* is available in English and French and on the internet. CWHN will fill a gap left after Healthsharing, the Toronto-based women's health magazine, stopped publishing in 1994. For more information ,call the Women's Health Clinic in Winnipeg at (204) 947-2422, ext 134.

On a sad note, BC's only magazine dealing with labour, politics and culture, *Pacific Current*, has ceased publication. The left-wing rag was two-years old and had already established a small, but strong, readership base in BC and nationally. But financial and other logistical issues became too much for the board, so it decided to fold until such time as someone was in a position to revive the magazine. We look forward to that time; BC certainly needs all the left publications it can get.

South of the border, the Republicans and Democrats are gearing up for a November election. Apart from all the boring, contrived coverage that's already barraging our TV sets, there will be some important things happening that women in Canada need to keep their eyes on.

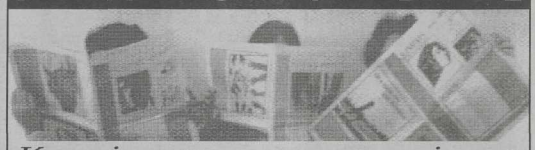
The recently passed welfare bill has brought in draconian measures that far outdo any poor-bashing efforts that right-wing elements have been able to initiate in Canada *[see page 5.]* But when we see how far Mike Harris has gone in destroying social programs and the non-profit sector in Ontario, we should stay vigilant.

The "social policy reform" here is following the same direction, though not at the lengths as in the US. We stand in solidarity with our sisters in the US.

Meanwhile in BC, women are still waiting for the NDP to complete its review of its "BC Benefits" welfare program, that brought in massive changes that adversely affect those in need of social assistance.

We'll have more next month.

INSIDE



Kinesis

Summer at Kinesis ended in early August when we returned to work on producing our September issue. Still, we did have the sun streaming into the icy cold production room as we pored over newsprint with X-acto knife and/or mouse, one ear to the phone, the other supporting that ubiquitous blue pencil...

The sun was especially welcome when life got rocky in Kinesis world. Most traumatic were the departures of a couple of core Kinesis people. Alex Hennig left the Editorial Board for OC (over committed,) reasons, but then promptly volunteered for production shifts to help get the issue out.

Alex sat on the Editorial Board for over a year, bringing a fresh perspective on ad design and other elements of production. We'll miss you, Alex...and hope you continue to join us on the Kinesis-go-round for many more years to come.

Also last month, we mourned the loss of our production coordinator, Laiwan. Laiwan left for other work commitments, general busy-ness and health reasons after being on contract with Kinesis for over a year. Laiwan brought Kinesis her technical expertise and a strong sense of design. As well, she introduced Kinesis to the wacky trial-and-error world of scanning images. She also contributed her writing, especially on Asian women and the arts. We will treasure her scans of Jenny Shimizu gracing the production room walls. We've been assured that Laiwan will continue to support Kinesis by contributing reviews, her technical wizadry (and perhaps fresh scans of Jenny?!) Thanks, Laiwan.

The Kinesis Editorial Board has decided to hold off on hiring a replacement for Laiwan until we complete restructuring efforts. We hope to post job descriptions for production support staff by the end of the year or early January. In the meantime, long-time Kinesis volunteer and production wiz Winnifred Tovey, the ever helpful Alex Hennig, and editor Agnes Huang coordinated the layout and paste-up this month, with special support from Lisa Valencia-Svensson, Fatima Jaffer, Sook C. Kong, Elaine Vieira, wendy kenward and Faith Jones. Many thanks!

However, while we loved the fun of collective design coordination, the Ed Board has decided to tone down the hair-raising elements that go along with collective creativity by hiring a contract desk-top publisher for the next couple of issues.

All was not traumatic at Kinesis...In fact, August held some delightful highlights. Lissa Geller, who's sat on Kinesis' Editorial Board—pregnantly for the last nine months--gave birth, after a very quick labour, to a baby boy, Joseph James. Joey will take the surname of his co-mother, Tracey Osbourne. Many many many congratulations to Lissa, Tracey, and big brother David!!!

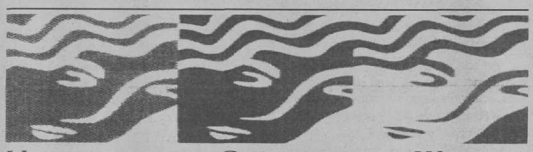
Other news on the celebration front is the upcoming, new and improved, Kinesis Annual Benefit and Raffle. Raffle tickets are already out there somewhere in Vancouver and wherever Kinesis-ites travel to, with some fabulous prizes including artwork, weekend getaways, and other goodies! The Benefit takes places on September 19th at the WISE Club in Vancouver. It is a smoke-free, alcohol-free, wheelchair accessible event, with fabulous entertainment by the newest all-woman band Onna Zoku Bang, Penny Singh and band, and the fabulous Sandy Scofield. Also lined up are good eats, Kinesis treats, emcee madness, and many door prizes!

Finally, we'd like to say a big thank you and welcome to new voices in this issue: Kagendo Murungi, Farida Akhtar, April Sumter-Frietag, Karen Lyons and Diana Gubiseh-Ayala.

And many many thanks to new production volunteers wielding blue pencil or X-acto knife for the first time: Sook C. Kong, Elaine Vieira, and Janet Winters.

If you want to join the ever-illustrious line-up of old-time, new-time women hanging out our over-super air-conditioned production room, call Agnes at 255-5499. We appreciate all kinds of help, anytime, so don't hold back if you don't have the experience. We'd love to see you!!

Until next month, sit back, struggle, hang on in there, support a friend or call one up, grab a Kinesis, read, eat, fight back, survive!!!



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A special thank you to our donors who give a gift every month. Monthly donations assist VSW in establishing a reliable funding base to carry out our programs, sevices and *Kinesis* throughout the year. Thanks to:

Barbara Curran * T.D. Gibson * Erin Graham * Jody Gordon * Barbara Lebrasseur * Lolani Moreau * Eha Onno * Sheilah Thompson * Elizabeth Whynot

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Rain Daniels * Jennifer Johnstone * Tori Johnstone * Joanne Namsoo * Terri Netsena

Finally, thanks to the women who helped mail out the annual report:

Heather Commodore * Andrea Imada

Corrections

Last issue, as *Kinesis* was going to press...we incorrectly identified BC's Minister of Social Services, Dennis Streifel. As well, we misspelled Arlene Mantle's last name in two places: page 3 and 14. Mantle performed "For Bread and Roses" at the National Women's March rally in Ottawa. And speaking of the March, the Women's March tape is not available through Festival Records as suggested last issue, but can be obtained from NAC by calling 1-800-665-5124.

NEWS

XI International AIDS Conference:

Which world? Whose hope?

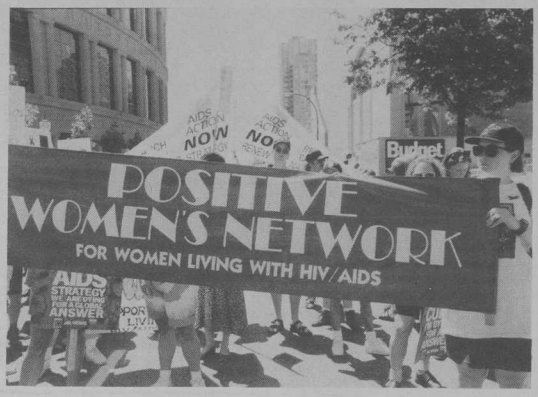
by Fatima Jaffer

It is easy to ponder, play with, or pun versions of the title, "One World, One Hope," of the XI International AIDS Conference that brought almost 15,000 delegates from around the world to Vancouver in early July. One such play on the title came from Act-Up's Paris members, who carried a huge banner asking, "What world? What hope?" at Act-Up's numerous demonstrations throughout the conference. *[Act-Up is the acronym for the US-based activist organization, AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power, which has chapters in North and Latin America and Europe.]*

Perhaps the clearest, most repeated message at the conference was that, despite the common threads bringing together people with HIV/AIDS, your chances of living with HIV depends very much on which world you live in. Study after study, speech after speech, told of the many, almost unbridgeable differences between those in "have" versus those in "have-not" communities—between those in the so-called "first" and "third" worlds; and between those in marginalized communities and in mainstream communities in the north.

This message was repeated over and over again, from the moment the AIDS Conference opened with spectacular ceremonies and speeches at General Motors Place on July 7th, through four very long days of plenary sessions, workshops, poster displays and discussions, symposia, roundtables, debates and cultural events, and on to the somewhat less spectacular, rather subdued closing ceremony on July 12th. Delegates heard evidence, as if for the first time, about how AIDS is a global epidemic. We heard that 94 percent of the almost 22 million people with HIV and AIDS live in developing countries, and almost half are women.

We also heard how there has been a slowing of the increase in the spread of HIV/AIDS in North America, but dramatic



variations in who is now being infected—women more than men, Black, Latino/a, Asian and Aboriginal peoples more than white people, heterosexuals versus gay men, prisoners versus non-incarcerated.

We heard that AIDS is the leading cause of death in African-American women, in Brazil and many other countries, and that women everywhere are the fastest growing risk group for HIV infection—for every two men, three women are infected.

That took care of the "One World" idea. One can only hope the organizers, who came up with the title, were expressing an idealistic hope that by imagining ourselves to be united, we would be inspired to work on a global response to HIV/AIDS. Though many of the distinctly different worlds were represented at the conference, it would take more than a huge leap of the imagination to believe there is indeed a global approach to eliminating and/or treating HIV/AIDS, or that the conference will effect the kinds of changes needed in funding and research priorities to turn the situation around.

As for "One Hope," long before the conference there had been stories of scientists, academics and pharmaceutical companies bringing hopeful news to Vancouver about combinations of new and existing drugs that are having positive effects on the health of some people living with HIV and AIDS. Numerous studies were presented on how drug therapies have successfully reduced the amount of HIV and raised T-cell blood counts to healthy levels in the (largely Western white male) populations they have been tested on.

Much of this information had been anxiously anticipated by the community workers, activists, and people living with HIV/AIDS attending the conference. While it fell far short of offering a cure for AIDS, it may have brought hope to a small minority. It however, holds little hope for the majority of those living with HIV/AIDS. Many delegates pointed out that the cost of the drugs are far too high to be accessible to people in the south or their governments. In the north, health care cutbacks, welfare cuts and other attacks on poor people guarantee that the majority of newly infected persons (women and those from marginalized communities) will not have access to these drugs. And, as we repeatedly heard, when people do not even have access to aspirin or malaria drugs, food, water or housing, then drugs treating HIV/AIDS are low among spending priorities.

Community Forum

In order to find ways to raise and discuss some of these issues at the conference, a strategizing Community Forum was held at the University of British Columbia prior to the official conference. It was attended by 100 people chosen from each of the five regions of the world, defined by organizers as North America, Europe, Asia-Pacific, Africa, and Latin America/Caribbean. Out of the Forum came numerous recommendations for international priorities for research, human rights, treatment, and community development.

Among the conclusions reached by the participants was that AIDS is "more than a virus. It is a combination of social, political and economic factors..." and that "research is knowledge created by all actors involved"—scientists, communities, financial agencies, governments and people living with HIV/AIDS. Participants called for a politics of solidarity that integrates science and activism, more networks, greater community involvement and collaborative research, and accountability by drug companies to people living with HIV/AIDS.

In their presentation to the formal Conference, Forum participants also announced the formation of an international human rights committee to monitor human rights abuses, such as compulsory testing, abuse of patient confidentiality, and travel restrictions on people with HIV/AIDS.

All photos by Fatima Jaffer

Forum participants drew connections between poor nutrition and poverty. Poor nutritution impairs the immune system, increases risks of contracting HIV, often leading to job loss and increased poverty, and the inability to maintain proper nutrition. The presenters said most of those afflicted with HIV die from wasting away before they contract AIDS-related illnesses.

Demonstration of support

On the day the Conference opened, a demonstration was organized in support of people living with HIV/AIDS around the world. The demonstration also aimed to draw media attention to the urgent need for the Canadian government to renew the

See AIDS, page 15

XI International Conference on AIDS: Violence against women:

Social factors increase risk

by E. Centime Zeleke

In addition to plenary sessions and lecture style presentations, there were poster symposiums at the XI International Conference on AIDS. Each poster symposium lasted for one hour and consisted of six or seven presentations using posters followed by discussion.

Given the time period allotted to each poster presenter (five minutes), it would appear that the organizers of the conference relegated some of what they perceived to be the "less" important topics to the poster symposiums.

However, one of the more inspiring sessions at the conference was in fact a poster symposium entitled, "Violence against women and HIV risk." The session was inspiring because it tried to make connections across various groups of community workers and organizers (something sadly lacking during the rest of the conference) and offered a broad-based analysis of issues around women's vulnerability to HIV.

Geeta Rao Gupta from the International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW) in Washington, DC was the first presenter. Framing the entire poster session, Gupta's presentation insisted that the AIDS community must foster connections with the violence against women movement if it wants to effectively protect women from HIV. She said that studies ICRW has conducted clearly show that sexual coercion, violence and fear of violence still prevent women from protecting themselves from HIV even if they have prevention information available to them.

The key issue for many women is the unequal power distribution between men and women, and from that, women's inability to be effective decision makers. Gupta stressed that social and economic empowerment of women must therefore be part of any AIDS prevention strategy. "A move forward for the AIDS community would be to build coalitions within countries at the grassroots level so that we can think together for strategies...to challenge social norms," she said.

Gupta expressed fear that if the AIDS community continued to work on the issue of AIDS as an issue unto itself, it might reinvent the wheel. Further, she pointed out that the fatality of AIDS to entire communities "tragically provides an opportunity to...underscore to governments the linkage between violence against women, health and economic development."

Gina M. Wingwood, a researcher at the University of Alabama, presented a poster describing a community-based study that looked at the effects of physical abuse on the sexual health and risk of HIV in African -American women in San Francisco. Her presentation emphasized much of what Gupta had said. However, she also talked about an intervention strategy developed by the project designed to promote long term condom use.

Wingwood said the strategy has been successful in increasing education and condom use, if not all the time, at least sometimes. She attributed its effectiveness "to the focus on gender relations in which HIV sexual risk behaviours occur...Few HIV prevention interventions have been based on theoretical models that address gender relations."

Allison Morill from the New England Research Institute was also quick to point out the gaps in traditional AIDS intervention programs. "Historically, models that look at HIV risk in women have been developed out of research with gay men where there is a more individualistic approach to what contributes to sexual decision making," she said.

Most of the presenters agreed that after years of AIDS education, it has become obvious that a woman's intention to protect herself from HIV infection is not enough to guarantee protection. Most participants at the symposium also agreed that prevention strategies must address all aspects of a woman's life.

It was also pointed out that the Beijing [4th World Conference on Women] Platform for Action includes specific recommendations for governments to adopt to address this very issue. Participants felt it was now time to hold governments accountable to their commitments.

There was also a call for AIDS organizations to work more closely with women's groups to implement the sections of the platform that deal with women and HIV/AIDS.

In a conversation after the session, Geeta Rao Gupta spoke about what an innovative AIDS prevention strategy would look like. She said that in Zambia, the National AIDS Program found that women fish-trade workers were often at risk when they performed sexual favours for fishermen in exchange for access to fish and transport. The AIDS program therefore advocated for the creation of a credit cooperative for these women. Through it, the women are now guaranteed access to fish and transportation. Because the women are more economically independent, they have reduced their risk of HIV infection.

E. Centime Zeleke covered the AIDS Conference for Kinesis and Coop Radio. She is a Vancouver-based Ethiopian feminist activist.

WOMEN UNITE, TAKE BACK THE NIGHT

In 1981, women across Canada took to the streets to demonstrate against male violence against women in the first coordinated national Take Back the Night march and rally.

This year, women in Vancouver will come together again to Take Back the Night Friday, September 20th. The annual action, organized by Vancouver Rape Relief and Women's Shelter as part of the Canadian Association of Sexual Assault Centres, will start at 7pm at Trout Lake (Victoria Drive and E. 15th Ave) with a rally, followed by a march and celebration. ***[Above is a photo from last's year's Take Back the Night march.]***

All women are encouraged to participate. Childcare, sign language interpreters and mobility attendants will be available. For more information or to pre-register for childcare, call Rape Relief at (604) 872-8212. Photo by Denise Howard.

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Women teachers in Ontario:

Forging a new federation

by Andrea Maenza

At their annual meeting, members of the Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario (FWTAO) voted to continue a process to discuss creating a new federation representing all public elementary school teachers.

The FWTAO is one of five teachers' federations in Ontario, along with the Ontario Public School Teachers' Federation (OPSTF), and unions representing Catholic school teachers, French teachers, and secondary school teachers. The FWTAO, the province's largest union, represents 41,000 women elementary school teachers.

The FWTAO was formed 78 years ago to combat sexism and address concerns of women teachers, such as the disproportionate representation in leadership positions. Even today, while 75 percent of elementary school teachers are women, only 37 percent of the principals are women.

The FWTAO also has long taken a strong advocacy role for equality for women as an active member of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, and through its support of feminist organizations in Ontario and numerous projects promoting women's rights.

With discussions still in the early stages, the FWTAO voted to continue negotiating a proposal that could end the all-woman membership of the union in favour of forming a new federation with their male-dominated counterpart, the 30,000-member OPSTF. Feeling pressure from the increasingly conservative political climate, the unions are considering joining together to strengthen their numbers to fight for a variety of issues concerning public education. The two unions will work together to develop a constitution for a new federation, for approval by members of both unions next summer.

Margaret Gee, the newly elected president of the FWTAO, explains the process is necessitated by the funding cutbacks to education and social programs being brought in by Mike Harris' Ontario government, as well as its repeal of the Employment Equity Act and removal of sections of the Education Act requiring progress towards employment equity.

"Times are such that we must now fight for all teachers' rights," says Gee, but she maintains that women's representation and equity issues cannot be separated from those rights. She adds the two federations have been working more closely together to challenge the funding cuts to education.

Gee says the proposal for a new federation is only in an exploratory stage and does not rule out other options for safeguarding teachers' rights and public education. She stresses that FWTAO's members will not abandon their previous work, and will seek to maintain their strong leadership role in areas of social justice and advocacy. Within broader efforts to preserve public education and ensure job security, Gee says work will also continue on women's equity and leadership programs.

The FWTAO says it will consider joining with OPSTF only if a set of principles are met in the constitution, such as: ensuring a number of seats for women in the new federation's executive, and maintaining training programs for women, regional representation, and the advocacy work for women's equality. "Rest assured... we will not lose our heritage," says Gee.

Interestingly, the current discussion of creating a new union of both men and women teachers comes after the FWTAO has spent more than ten years in court fighting a battle over the right to safeguard their all-women membership. In 1985, after two women complained about mandatory membership in the FWTAO (requiring all women elementary school teachers to join the FWTAO), the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) ruled that the federation's mandatory membership clause constituted sexual discrimination. The OPSTF, which by then had dropped the word "men" from its title and was offering voluntary free membership to women, was a co-complainant in the case.

In a 1995 appeal, the Ontario Court General Division upheld the decision of the OHRC. The FWTAO is further appealing that ruling and the case will be heard by the Ontario Court of Appeal in November.

If the ruling is upheld, the FWTAO would be forced to remove the mandatory membership clause from their constitution, while other teachers unions (such as the Catholic and French teachers unions) would not. The federation would then become the only voluntary teachers' union in the province, potentially threatening their collective strength.

Even though the FWTAO is considering forming a new "Federation for the Future" with the OPSTF, the right to maintain a women-only mandatory membership clause is still an important issue for them, says Gee. Regardless of where the discussions for a new union end up, the FWTAO remains adamant in their plans to take their fight all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada, if necessary.

Andrea Maenza recently escaped Mike Harris' Ontario.

Women, welfare and the US:

Single moms hardest hit

by Smita Patil

The National Organization of Women held a large demonstration outside the White House in Washington, DC last month, to protest the signing into law by US President Clinton of a bill that will dismantle the already minimal US welfare program and social safety net. The law will affect millions of unemployed Americans at a time when there are few jobs available at above-minimum wage.

Women chanted slogans like "No veto, no vote," reminding Clinton that by signing the bill instead of using his presidential veto to block it, women are not going to vote for him in the next election.

The new law will have devastating consequences for tens of millions of people living in the US, and in particular single mothers. Single moms make up 90 percent of all people who receive welfare in the US.

The core of the new law abolishes Aid to Families with Dependant Children, which provides monthly cash benefits to almost 13 million people, including 8 million children. This is to be replaced with block grants to the states to run welfare and workfare programs. The block grants are contingent on states withdrawing support from the recipient if they remain unemployed after two years. And states could lose some of the federal financing if a quarter of welfare recipients in the state are not working by next year. The bill also sets a five-year lifetime limit for aid from federal block funds, which will affect over half of the Americans currently receiving welfare payments.

Single mothers are required to work within two years of receiving benefits if their youngest child is over the age of 5, and are only eligible for Medicaid if they are receiving welfare. A single mom with children under 5 years is allowed to draw benefits if she is not working, but only if she proves she cannot find suitable, affordable childcare.

Unmarried mothers under 18 years old are required to live with an adult and attend school in order to receive welfare. They are exempt from living with a parent or guardian only if they can prove they or their child is at risk of "serious" physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse, or exploitation.

All single moms will be required to provide information about the father of her child(ren) as a condition of receiving welfare, to enable the state to force him to provide child support. In many cases, this is almost guaranteed to endanger the life of the mother and/or child(ren).

Low-income disabled children will no longer be eligible for welfare. It is estimated

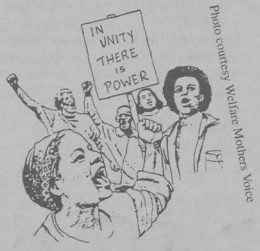


Photo courtesy Welfare Mothers Voice

Photo courtesy Welfare Mothers Voice

that over the next six years, at least 315,000 low-income children with disabilities will be denied access to benefits and Medicaid.

Childless unemployed people may receive food stamps only for three months in a three-year period, with three additional months if she gets a job and then loses it. This affects at least one million people.

Anyone who has ever been convicted on a drug charge under federal or state law will not be allowed to receive either cash benefits or food stamps, with the state being given the option to override the ban.

The bill also attacks the rights of legal immigrants, who for their first ten years in the USA will no longer be eligible for food stamps or supplement welfare assistance, presently available to immigrants who are needy, aged or have disabilities. States will also be allowed to cut off cash assistance, Medicaid and social services for noncitizens currently receiving such aid. In assessments, the income and assets of an immigrant's sponsor will now be assumed to be available to the immigrant.

A large portion of the $55 billion that the bill is intended to save the government over the next six years will come from the cuts in immigrant aid, and $24 billion alone will come from cuts in food stamps to all needy Americans, immigrant and non-immigrant.

The bill was the third version of "welfare reform" plans designed by Republicans. It was accepted in US Senate by both Republicans and Democrats, with an equal number (23) of Democrats opposing the bill as voting for it. Clinton's signing of the bill is widely seen as an election-year concession to right-wing, anti-immigrant, poor-bashing sentiments among Americans.

Pat Gowens, editor of Welfare Mothers Voice, a Wisconsin-based newspaper written by mothers in poverty, points out that: "[American] corporate politicians and media have convinced too many average Americans that if *they* can't receive any of that "child care and health care" allegedly given to the most destitute moms, then *no one* should get it."

WHAT'S NEWS

compiled by Andrea Maenza

RU-486 approved in US

After a long wait, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recommended the approval of RU-486, the so-called "abortion pill." In July, the FDA ruled the drug is safe, effective and that the risks, including pain and bleeding, are acceptable.

RU-486, designed to terminate early pregnancies, may be taken by women up to seven weeks pregnant. It has to be taken in conjunction with another drug, misoprostol, which has already been approved by the FDA. For American women, the drug is the first approved alternative to surgical abortion.

The FDA's decision was based largely on the findings of two studies of French women, which found an overall success rate of 95.5 percent. RU-486 is already available to women in France, England, Sweden and China. It has yet to be approved for use in Canada.

BC psychiatrist acquitted for sex assault

The Supreme Court of Canada has refused to order back to trial a Vancouver psychiatrist acquitted of indecent and sexual assault against former patients. In its ruling last month, the court rejected any further attempts to secure a criminal conviction against James Tyhurst.

Tyhurst, the head of psychiatry at the University of British Columbia from 1959-1970, was charged with subjecting female patients to indecent and sexual assault, including "master-slave" relationships. In the original trial, four women testified about assaults occurring between 1966 and 1983.

In 1991, Tyhurst was convicted and sentenced to four years in prison. However, that ruling was overturned by the BC Court of Appeal in 1993, on the grounds that the trial judge had not properly instructed the jury on reasonable doubt. The case was sent back to trial.

During Tyhurt's subsequent trial, only two of the original complainants testified. After deliberating for six days, the jury acquitted Tyhurst. The Crown appealed the acquittal, but earlier this year, it was dismissed by the BC Court of Appeal. And now the Supreme Court of Canada dashed the women's last hope of getting a conviction.

One of the women says she intends to pursue civil suits against Tyhurst and the College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC. She says the college should have removed Tyhurst's medical license 15 years ago.

New study links estrogen and Alzheimer's

The findings of a study from Columbia University in New York suggest that women who have reached menopause and take estrogen replacement drugs have a reduced risk of getting Alzheimer's disease. While not prepared to recommend that most older women start taking estrogen, the scientists who conducted the research say the findings do justify a large, federally sponsored clinical trial to further investigate the matter.

The five year study found that only 2.7 percent of women who had taken estrogen after menopause were diagnosed with Alzheimer's each year, while 8.4 percent of those who had never taken estrogen developed the disease. The scientists also say other studies have found that hormone replacement therapy reduces the risk of heart disease and osteoporosis.

However, the study did not focus on the negative effects often associated with estrogen or hormone replacement therapies for post-menopausal women, including increased risk of breast and ovarian cancer.

Childcare task force urged

Child care advocates are calling on Ottawa to create a task force which would work to resolve the wrangling between provincial and federal governments over the creation of a national child care program.

In June, the Liberal government did give some indication it would consider the idea of a task force at the National Action Committee on the Status of Women's annual lobby of federal politicians.

A recent poll conducted for the Child Care Advocacy Association found that 65 per cent of Canadians support a national child care program, supported jointly by fees and government funds. Despite this widespread support, Ottawa and the provinces have yet to come to an agreement about sharing the costs of creating licenced day-care centres. The impasse has resulted in thousands of families no longer being able to afford good day care.

In Ontario, according to the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, changes this past April in how money is transferred from Ottawa to the provinces *[with the implementation of the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST)]*, combined with provincial cutbacks to transfer payments to municipalities, have led to an erosion in child care services.

More than 9,000 child care subsidies have been lost in Ontario since the Mike Harris' Tories were elected in June 1995. This is due to the provincial government's new requirement that municipalities pay 20 percent of the cost of 14,000 day-care subsidies, or else lose the remaining 80 percent provided by the province. As many municipalities have not been able to afford the extra costs, thousands of daycare subsidies have been cancelled.

Japan apologizes to "comfort women"

On August 14, Japanese Prime Minister issued a long-awaited written apology to women forced into sex slavery by Japanese soldiers during the Second World War. The apology, accompanied by payments from a private fund backed by the Japanese government, was addressed to four Filipina women who had applied to receive the sums.

This is the first time the Japanese government has ever publicly apologized for the forced enslavement of women and girls by the Japanese military. While activists welcomed the apology, many are still furious over the Japanese government's refusal to use public funds for compensation.

Survivors and their supporters have been organizing for years to pressure the Japanese government to claim full responsibility for the torture and abuse. A private fund was established that expects to issue payments of $25,000 to each of the estimated 300 surviving Asian women forced to service the Japanese army. Approximately 200,000 women and girls were subjected to sexual slavery in military brothels organized by the Japanese Imperial Army throughout Asia from 1931 to 1945.

The apology comes after testimony from some of the former "comfort women" was heard in an ongoing lawsuit against the Japanese government, demanding damages and a public apology.

Many of the survivors have said they will refuse the payments from the private fund because they want direct compensation from the government. They object to use of private money to the assist the government in evading responsibility.

Sarah Balabagan freed from prison

Sarah Balabagan, a teenage Filipina domestic worker who was convicted of murder for stabbing her employer in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), was released from jail on July 31.

Balabagan was despite evidence that she killed the man in self-defence because he was trying to rape her.

Balabagan was sentenced to death, but last October, under pressure from women's and migrant workers' groups worldwide, the UAE president helped to convince the family of the man to drop their insistence for her execution. In exchange, Balabagan was sentenced to one-year in prison and 100 lashes and ordered to pay US$41,000 to the man's family *[see* Kinesis *November 1995.]*

Balabagan was released after completing three quarters of her one-year sentence for good behaviour, according to the Philippine government.

Native people take health concerns to UN

The disparity between health care provided in Canada for Native people versus the general population was presented recently in a report to the UN Working Group on Indigenous Peoples by the Confederacy of the Treaty Six First Nations.

The report listed comparative statistics on health, including the following: life expectancy is almost 10 years shorter for Aboriginal peoples than the national average; diabetes is 4.5 times more likely, tuberculosis nine times; and suicide is 2.5 times more common than among the general population.

The report also raised the fact that most Aboriginal peoples live in poverty, and endure poor and overcrowded housing conditions which contribute to injuries, respiratory problems, spread of infections and stress. The findings of this report are consistent with previous studies, including one released by the Assembly of First Nations in February.

The Canadian government maintains there has been an overall improvement over the past decade in First Nations health. Paul Cochrane, assistant deputy health minister, acknowledges a gap in health status, while adding that "...in many cases the gap has closed."

WOMEN UNITE,
TAKE BACK
THE NIGHT
A WOMEN-ONLY
PROTEST

All women live with the fear of rape. Each time we hear of a woman being raped or beaten, we know it could have been us. We take what precautions we can to be safe, but ultimately we cannot control whether or not we are attacked.

Take Back The Night is one night during the year when women walk together through the streets, at night, without fear of being attacked by a man, BECAUSE WE WALK TOGETHER. We walk without the protection of men, experiencing the freedom that should be our right. Join us this year.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 1996
7:00 PM
RALLY AT TROUT LAKE
(VICTORIA AND 15TH AVE)
MARCH AND CELEBRATION TO FOLLOW

ORGANIZED BY
VANCOUVER RAPE RELIEF AND WOMEN'S SHELTER
AS PART OF THE
CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF SEXUAL ASSAULT CENTRES

Sign language interpretation • Wheelchair accessible • Childcare available
For more information, call Rape Relief @ 872-8212

MOVEMENT MATTERS

listings information

Movement Matters is designed to be a network of news, updates and information of special interest to the women's movement.

Submissions to Movement Matters should be no more than 500 words, typed, double spaced and may be edited for length. Deadline is the 18th of the month preceding publication.

compiled by Joanne Namsoo

VSW celebrates 25 years

On Saturday, November 2, the Vancouver Status of Women will celebrate its 25th anniversary with a gala fundraising event—VSW 25 & Alive! Founded in 1971 as a voice for women, VSW provides education, advocacy and services, and strives to create a just society in which all women are equal. As well, VSW is the publisher of *Kinesis*.

The anniversary event is being held in conjunction with the Vancouver launch of *Politically Speaking*, a book of conversations between Toronto-based feminist activists Judy Rebick and Kike Roach, on a variety of issues including the evolution of feminism and anti-racism struggles, confronting the right-wing, and the challenge of left-wing activism in Canada.

VSW is inviting everyone who has ever been involved with the organization over the past 25 years to come and celebrate. This includes early collective members, former staff members, women who have volunteered with VSW or *Kinesis*, members and contributors, and friends of the organization.

In addition to a dialogue between Judy Rebick and Kike Roach, the event will feature speakers from the early, middle and present time-periods in VSW's history, and a performance by Sawagi Taiko.

The event will take place in the Multipurpose Room, Central Branch of the Vancouver Public Library, 350 W. Georgia St, Vancouver. Doors open at 6:30pm. The venue is wheelchair accessible. Advance tickets, on a sliding scale, are available from VSW for $5-$2,500. Refreshments will be served.

For more information about the event, call Audrey Johnson at (604) 255-5511, or drop by VSW at #301-170 Grant St, Vancouver.

Breast cancer gene screening challenged

An ad hoc collection of feminist activists and academics is planning to send a message to Ottawa during Breast Cancer Awareness Month (October) about the current direction in genetics research and practice.

The group says it is concerned with the efforts of Myriad Genetics, a US-based biotechnology company, to patent the BCRA1 and BCRA2 genes—which it calls the "breast cancer genes"—and to make genetic screening tests for them widely available on a commercial basis. Myriad claims that detecting alterations in the BCRA genes indicate "susceptibility" to breast cancer.

The group counters that there is no convincing evidence that screening for the BCRA genes has much value in preventing breast cancer or is in the best interest of women.

Currently, the group is gathering signatures from individual women and women's groups for an open letter to the federal minister of health, David Dingwall, and John Manley, the minister of industry and science, expressing concern with the proliferation of tests to screen for genetic "susceptibility" and the attempts to patent human parts, products and processes.

The group is demanding a more open process for groups and individuals to discuss and decide on these issues, saying it is not good enough to just let the "market" decide. About twenty women and organizations have already endorsed the letter, which will be released in late October.

Among the concerns with genetic screening is that the BCRA1 gene is associated with the development of breast and/or ovarian cancer in only a small percentage of cases; that is, in women with readily identifiable and extensive family histories of these diseases. For most women, screening for these particular genes are of little value. Furthermore, tests indicating the presence of an altered BCRA1 gene do not indicate a women will definitely develop cancer; conversely, tests showing it is not present do not guarantee a woman will *not* develop breast cancer in her life.

The tests may also do more harm than good. Some women who have gone through the testing say they found the experience psychologically devastating. As well, there is concern that a "positive" test result will lead to discrimination against the women, such as being refused various forms of insurance, employment and immigration.

The group says the real benefits from widescale screening will go to companies who market and distribute the tests. Meanwhile, women will continue to be exposed to environmental and occupational sources of risk for breast cancer because research into these will continue to be ignored while the hunt for the genes goes on full speed.

For more information or a copy of the open letter, contact Fiona Miller, Feminist Alliance on New Reproductive and Genetic Technologies, #2-716 College St, Toronto, Ontario, M6G 1C3; tel/fax: (416) 537-4991; e-mail: FMILLLER@YORKU.CA.

Bill of Rights for contraceptives

Reproductive rights activists now have a new resource to help them analyze research and development on contraceptives. The ad hoc Canadian Women's Committee on Population Development (CWC) has produced a policy document laying out guidelines for research, testing, distribution and use of contraceptives. The *Bill of Rights for Contraceptive Research, Development and Use* also outlines some general principles related to planning and priority setting for funders of health programs, and to the development and use of contraceptives.

This document was produced in consultation with women and women's health organizations from many different regions of the world. In developing the Bill, the Committee says it was responding to a need identified in Canada for a set of articulated principles and ethical guidelines governing contraceptive development, testing and use.

CWC believes that adoption of the guidelines would lead to safer, more effective and accessible forms of contraception in the context of integrated health programs for women.

However, the group does not view this document as the "last word" on these issues. Individuals and organizations are urged to discuss and improve upon the document and to share it with women and men everywhere.

The Bill of Rights is available in both English and in French. Copies of the Bill are free; however, a handling fee of $3.00 will be charged for orders of 50 or more. To order, please contact the Canadian Women's Committee on Population and Development, c/o Women's Health Interaction, 58 Arthur St, Ottawa, Ontario, K1R 7B9.

Photo exhibit of "Comfort Women"

The Canadian Coalition for "Comfort Women" Redress (CCCWR) mounted a photo exhibit last May in Toronto, documenting the lives of "Comfort Women"—women and girls forced into sexual slavery during World War II by the Japanese military. The Toronto exhibit was the first in Canada, but the Coalition hopes the display will be shown in other cities.

The exhibit was amassed and curated by the Washington, DC Coalition for "Comfort Women" Redress, and has been displayed throughout the US.

The "Comfort Women" were women in their early teens to early 30s, and were mostly from poor or working class homes. About 80 percent were Korean, but Chinese, Vietnamese, Thai, Burmese, Indian, Filipino, Indonesian, Malay, and Taiwanese women and girls were also forced into this sexual slavery. Many of the women and girls were abducted and subjected to brutal violence, multiple rapes and imprisonment by the Japanese army. Many were killed.

For more information about the exhibit and the work of CCCWR, contact: Meerai Cho (416) 466-3255, Katharine Kim (416) 536-3465, or Beth Seo (416) 923-6998. Donations to support touring the photo exhibit can be sent to CCCWR, c/o 382 Harbord St, Toronto, Ontario, M6G 1H9.

Asian NGOs gear up for World Food Summit

Representatives from 18 countries gathered in Bangkok, Thailand last April to discuss strategies for ending world hunger and ensuring food security within the Asia-Pacific region. The meeting was organized by the Asia-Pacific Regional Office of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) as part of the preparations for the World Food Summit to be held in Rome, Italy from November 13-17.

From the discussions, a declaration was formulated and presented to the FAO at the Regional Governmental Consultation which took place in Apia, Western Samoa in May. In their declaration, the Asian NGOs outlined specific tasks which need to be undertaken in the region to ensure food security for all. The framework of these tasks rests upon the reiteration of the principle of "democratic control of those who produce the food and local communities themselves, with special emphasis on establishing mechanisms to ensure the participation of women at all levels of the decision-making process."

Attendance at the meeting reflected the minimal value given to women's contribution in the whole process of food production. Only 25 percent of the participants were women, with only two women's groups represented--Isis International-Manila, and the World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA).

At the meeting, Dr. Vandana Shiva, Director of the Research Foundation for Science ,Technology and Natural Resource Policy in New Delhi, India revealed the fallacies of the reasoning behind the pro-free trade stance of the FAO. She stressed that food security cannot be ensured by entrusting agriculture, food production and trade to global markets.

The participants agreed that it is critical to meet head-on the current trend and implementation of trade liberalization policies which allow the entry and dominance of extremely powerful multinational agribusinesses into agriculture.

For more information about the Asian NGOs' position on world food production and on women's participation, contact Isis International-Manila, PO Box 1837, Quezon City Main, Quezon City 1100, Philippines; tel: (632) 411-1526; fax: (632) 924-1065; e-mail: Isis@Phil.gn.apc.org.

Housing co-op for older women

The sod was recently turned and construction is now underway on the first housing co-op for older women in Toronto. The co-op, initiated by the Older Women's Network (OWN), is due to be completed next spring.

The building will consist of 140 suites, and is intended for women 45 years and older who are in need of assisted housing. Marketing is expected to begin this fall, at which time OWN members will be the first to be offered applications.

The construction of this co-op was eight years in the making, having had to struggle through multiple layers of bureaucracy. The project also recently survived the funding cutbacks to co-op housing by the right-wing Harris government. It was one of the few co-op contracts not pulled by the provincial government.

The Head Tax tool kit

The Toronto-based Ad Hoc Coalition Against the Head Tax has released *The Head Tax Tool Kit: A Tool for Education and Action* to assist individuals and groups in challenging the $975 landing fee imposed on all adult immigrants and refugees to Canada, introduced by the Liberal government in 1995.

The kit was prepared by a working group of educators, academics, activists and frontline workers, and is designed for use by secondary schools, community groups, temples/mosques/churches, grassroots social-justice groups, and unions.

The contents include: an overview of the Head Tax and related issues, an examination of the particular impact of the Head Tax on women and people of colour, case studies, a review of the Chinese Head Tax and Exclusion Act, activities, and suggestions for action and resources for further study.

To order or for more information, contact: Citizens for Public Justice, #311-229 College St, Toronto, Ontario, M5T 1R4; or South Etobicoke Community Legal Services, #303-2970 Lakeshore Blvd. West, Toronto, Ontario, M8V 1J9. Suggested donation is $5.

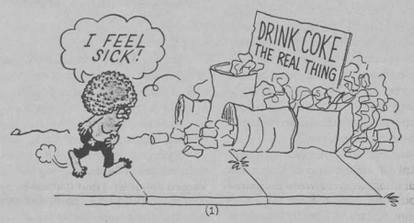
Women in Bangladesh:

The sun is always rising in the women's world

by Farida Akhter as told to Agnes Huang

Farida Akhter is a longtime feminist activist and the executive director of UBINIG, the Policy Research for Development Alternatives, in Bangladesh. She was in Ottawa in June as an international guest of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women's (NAC) annual general meeting. She gave two workshop talks during Tent City as part of the National Women's March Against Poverty and participated in NAC's lobby of federal political parties.

Kinesis *had the opportunity to speak with Farida Akhter in Ottawa about feminist activism and grassroots organizing in Bangladesh and about the recent national election held in Bangladesh.*



The interview took place less than a week after the election, in which the Awami League, led by Sheik Hasina Wazed defeated the incumbent prime minister Begum Khaleda Zia and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) but did not win enough of the 300 general seats to form a majority government. However, the Awami League has since achieved a majority after appointing women from its own party to 27 of the 30 seats in parliament reserved for women.

Agnes Huang: Can you start by telling us about the work you do in Bangladesh?

Farida Akhter: UBINIG was formed in 1984 as a research organization, not academic necessarily, but in order to supplement the needs of the activist movement.

When we first started, we were working on the issue of population control. At that time, it was not enough to say population control was bad. We could not say what the real experiences of the Bangladesh population control policy was, so we had to collect information. We went around to villages, talked to people, especially women, about how it was affecting their lives.

If you look at population control programs, they are very interesting. On the one hand, they are very political in terms of targetting poor people. Population control is enforced on poor people—like forced sterilization, dumping contraceptives on them, inducing people to take contraceptives by giving them money...

The other part of population control is very commercial, it's a business. When the Canadian government supports population control policies, one reason is that they supply [birth control] pills. Canada may seem to be very nice when it is not supporting Norplant, but that's because Canada is not producing [or selling] Norplant; the US is.

What we are finding is that [countries like Canada and the US] are actually promoting their business and dumping contraceptives. For example, they do experiments on women's bodies in Bangladesh, Indonesia and India, such as with the anti-fertility vaccines *[see* Kinesis *July/August 1995,]* for their own medical science purposes—I don't call it science; it's business. [In those countries,] they find cheap women's bodies, perhaps cheaper than guinea pigs. I think in the West, guinea pigs are getting expensive, and Bangladeshi women are easier to get. When the Bangladeshi government takes out a policy of population control and implements it with imported contraceptives from the West, then all these [abuses] are possible.

Population control policy is funded by foreign money. It is a World Bank funded project in which all developed countries are putting in money: $600 million project per year over several years. But the majority of the money has gone back to import contraceptives.

This is what population control policy is. It is not a family planning program; that's what I also want to make clear. For example, many people think we are against family planning when we talk against population control. We are definitely against population control, but we are not against access to contraceptives or safe abortion facilities.

So don't tell me that Canada is supporting family planning programs in Bangladesh. Canada is only supporting population control programs.

Huang: Can you talk about the activism of women, like yourself, in fighting against population control?

Akhter: Initially, it was not a women's movement issue. The movement was more interested in violence, dowry or rape cases, equality questions. Somehow, they did not think that the abuse of contraceptives was their issue. After we had done all the research [on the abuse,] we focused on how women are being affected.

By 1989, we got the women's movement to take up this issue. Now the majority of women's organizations, especially the progressive ones, will speak out against population control, clearly, and also against the abuse of contraceptives. That is progress. But the mainstream women's movement is still focused on violence, poverty and discrimination in the constitution, inheritance rights and property rights.

Huang: Do they not see population control as clearly linked to violence and poverty?

Akhter: They are making those links now. They see that only poor women are being targeted, and are questioning that. Women are not poor because they are breeding too many children; women are poor because society discriminates against them. Still, I would say it is quite hard to get it into the mainstream discussion.

Huang: How does the women's movement in Bangladesh organize and carry out activist work?

Akhter: Basically, there are individual women's organizations, and some have 25 years of experience. Bangladesh's women's movement is quite mature. Many people think we only get ideas from Western countries, but that is not true. Even in the 1930s, we had women who were talking about feminist issues. And since 1971, we've had a small countrywide women's group which has been working mainly on violence and equal rights issues.

Now there are many [national women's groups] and even the NGOs that are working on development issues have special programs on women. They have become linked to the women's movement rather than only to the development side.

There has been another trend since 1987 when the women's movement said we should not work alone; we should form alliances. In 1987, we formed a group called United Women's Front, and we were very much involved in the democratic movement, with the political process. We fought against the dictatorship.

In 1990, we were on the streets marching against the dictator, talking about fundamentalists, and everything. We were very vocal and were able to get rid of the dictator *[Lieutenant General Hossain Mohammad Ershad.]*

For some time afterwards, we were quiet because we had gotten a democratic government (so we thought,) an elected government, and also a woman prime minister and a woman opposition leader. *[Begum Khaleda Zia and the BNP won a huge majority in the 1991 election with Sheik Hasini Wazed and the Awami League forming the opposition party.]*

We were quite disappointed because they were not interested in talking about women's issues. In fact, more violence has happened during this last sitting [of parliament] and there has been more fundamentalist reaction against women in the last two years.

Again, women's groups organized together to bring out our demands. But what happened was every time we held a press conference, the first question journalists asked us was: "Don't you think that by having a woman prime minister and a woman opposition leader, [women] are better off?"

Just having a woman prime minister and opposition leader—who are only there because of their husbands or fathers—is not a political process [that works for women.] In Bangladesh, we have 30 seats in the parliament reserved for women. The seats are *not* elected. We have been demanding that these seats be directly elected by women voters so that we get our representatives into the parliament to talk about our issues. What happens is the majority party—or the one which forms the government—chooses their own candidates for those 30 seats. What they do is pull in their sisters or cousins or friends or whoever has been working for them, but not those who are talking about women.

During the last five years, we have been very vocal in raising this issue. Even though in this election, the seats were not elected directly because it requires a constitutional change, we were able to talk to all the political parties about whether they are willing to make changes. We did not get commitment from everybody because they have a vested interest in [the current system.]

Women's groups have become political. They are thinking that we really have to intervene at the parliamentary level; we have to make changes in the constitution itself.

Maybe in the next election many of the women activists will actually be contesting seats. It's not enough that there are some women in the political parties, and we are only shouting from outside. We have to intervene in the political process.

Huang: In the recent election, a lot of women went to the polls. Was that due to what you were talking about: the politicization of women and women realizing that they have to affect the parliamentary process?

Akhter: In the 1991 election, there were women who voted, but not in such large numbers. This time, the voter turnout among women was 73 percent, and every centre reported a significant number of women coming out to vote.

Women's organizations mobilized women voters this time particularly. We had television programs before the election specifically addressing women voters to say that: "This time we will not remain quiet; we will not keep our votes silent. We will vote and decide the candidates...," even though we didn't have much choice. *[Neither the BNP or the Awami League are considered progressive political parties.]*

The results showed one very interesting thing: the fundamentalists did not get votes. And that is because, I think, there was a significant number of women who did not vote for fundamentalist candidates. So even if the men voted for them, they could not win.

Some candidates from the major political parties, and even some who were in the last regime, were not elected. People who are identified as *bad* [laughs], weren't elected.

Before the election, women's organizations had been talking to all the political parties, and we managed to at least get some commitment on women's issues from all of them. In their election speeches they had to mention women's rights. They had to say that they believe in women's rights, and that they'll give this and that. At least they promised something. I think this is a change.

Huang: The Awami League won the election but with less than a majority. The BNP had a large majority coming into this election. What does this signal in terms of the political process in Bangladesh?

Akhter: We will still have a woman prime minister and a woman opposition leader, that is the same. But it is a different person.

Huang: Is that a victory for women?

Akhter: At least it shows those people who did not want to acknowledge that women should rule the country, that women can run the country, that women should be leading political parties.

People said one thing through this election and that is: "If you are not doing a good job, we need a change." Even if the change may not be a good one—because we don't have a choice, people wanted change, and that change was expressed through votes.

I'm not saying the Awami League is better or worse than the BNP; it may be the same because actually it is the bureaucracy which runs the government. The bureaucracy is also influenced by a lot of other international factors. For example the Awami League will still be implementing Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs) because it is World Bank policy. So I don't know how much they will be responding in favour of the people rather than in favour of the donor agencies who are paying them.

The bureaucracy is still there and the Awami League has much support from it, which is a bad sign. The bureaucracy is not accountable to the people. I think we will have to be more vigilant, to keep on working hard to force the political parties at least to address women's issues. And we will do that.

For example, we plan to be vigilant in seeking justice in the Yasmeen case—the case of a girl who was raped and killed by policemen last year. It happened during the 4th World Conference on Women in Beijing. These police officers tried to make up a story that she was a prostitute and was in their van and that she jumped from the van and died. But the post mortem report showed she was raped and strangled to death.

She was only 14 years old and was working in Dhaka as a domestic servant. She was going out to see her mother and that's when she was raped. The people in her [home village] revolted against her rape and murder, and seven more people died during demonstrations because the police opened fire on them.

We organized marches in Dhaka city and in different districts of the country to demand a trial of these police officers. But nothing happened because the administration was trying to cover it up. They did not want to take any action against the police.

Since then, we have found out that the police have continued these kinds of acts in many other places in the country. So we got even angrier. We demanded the removal of the home minister. And to give a very important example [of the strength of the women's movement...] the home minister was not removed by Khaleda Zia, but this time our voters have removed him....[laughs]. He was not re-elected.

So now that a new government is formed, we are saying that the first thing they have to do is to set an example that if police are doing these kind of things, they should be on trial.

Huang: The number of women who are mobilized on the ground in Bangladesh is clear from the number of women that went to the polls and took progressive stands by voting out the fundamentalists. In Canada, this issue of grassroots organizing is important for women especially as NAC embarks on a priority campaign of lobbying and influencing political parties and candidates before the next federal election and raising public awareness about women's equality issues and the philosophical and policy positions of the parties. What are your thoughts about strategies for building a grassroots movement that can be effective?

Akhter: I think the more we are organized at the grassroots level, the stronger we are. What I found in Bangladesh is that whenever we had more demonstrations at the district level, those were much more militant. Whenever a village woman speaks up, that is the best speech because they talk from their real experiences and feelings, and those are so genuine.

I also found that people [in Canada] who were speaking from their real experiences are the most articulate ones. So I think those people who are working more at the community level, are definitely going to succeed, one day or the other. I find so much commonality in terms of the strategies. Maybe we differ only in the extent of poverty—when you say $7.85 per hour [the demand for the federal minimum wage,] it is that for us for a month. That's the only difference: the level of poverty and the extent of our demands. But in terms of strategy, it is very similar.

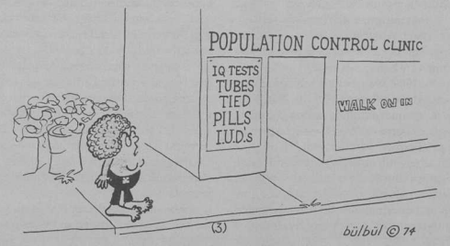
Huang: What are your thoughts then of how to build up that support and activism at the community level?

Akhter: This kind of sharing is very important. [It would be good] if we could share our information between the journal you're publishing and the journals we are publishing. I think we really should be working more to have more articles [in Canadian feminist publications] so that Bangladesh doesn't just become a far away country.

One kind of solidarity method is to get the message out that the sun in the women's world does not set, because when it is setting in Canada, it is rising in Bangladesh. The sun is always up somewhere in the world—it is not setting anywhere; it is always rising. I think that is something the women's movement should know. We don't have to worry about darkness. If you are seeing the darkness, somebody else is seeing the sunshine.

Huang: That is very inspiring for a lot of women who are quite disillusioned and cynical about how much change we can effect, and about how much struggle it will take to actually make some positive change.

Akhter: I was quite disgusted to hear the way the Canadian finance minister [Paul Martin] dealt with the $50 million demand for feminist services working to end violence against women. *[The demand was one of the 15 demands of the National Women's March. Martin rejected the demand at the NAC lobby meeting with the Liberal government.]* In fact, no commitments to meet the demands are being made because they are all related to poverty or violence, or immigrant people or disabled people.



So when I see that the Canadian government has such a nice gender development program in Bangladesh—for women in development—and they say they're concerned about us, I find it a real hypocrisy. Poverty should be a concern all over the world. I don't care whether it is in Vancouver or Bangladesh. Nowhere should women suffer; nowhere should women be discriminated against. How can a government present such a nice face in Bangladesh, but totally deny the demands of the women in its own country. That's hypocrisy.

Huang: You're smiling, and a lot of the time, I'm not smiling. How do you stay so optimistic and strong?

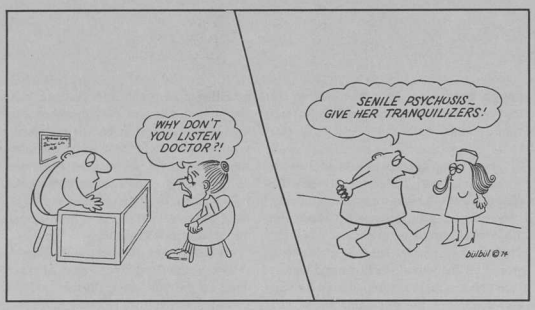
Akhter: It has been very hard and of course we get a lot of leg aches *[laughs]* from marching a lot. But the reason we are able to smile—and survive—is that we have roots with our own people. I often find strength there. I don't care if the government is against us because we are with the people. And we have genuine things; we are not hypocrites; we are not saying things out of vested interest; our demands are genuine. Nobody can say this is our self-interest. It is the interest of the people. And because we have that strength, even under such disgraceful conditions, we can smile. And I think that without smiling we can't survive *[laughs.]*

I must tell you one experience [I had the last time I was in Canada.] We visited a reserve and it was a real poor community. We went to a community centre where all these women came to meet us. We were six women from six different countries. At that meeting, the women were talking about poverty. And they were talking about the beating by their husbands and the abuse. But after every sentence they said about violence, they laughed. I found it so similar to Bangladeshi women—they can be talking about beatings and not eating for two days and then they're laughing. I was surprised about our own people and then I saw the same kind of thing here in Canada among the poor people. Maybe there's something natural about it *[laughs.]*

Mental health legislation in BC:

Guardianship ripoff

by Irit Shimrat



Under the BC Mental Health Act, you can be confined and medicated against your will if you are deemed by psychiatrists to be a danger to yourself or others. One of the ways mental health professionals "help" us when we go off the deep end is to incarcerate us, take away all our rights, and drug us into a cooperative, or at least quiet, state. Popular methods of dealing with people who are particularly distressed include solitary confinement, physical restraints (shackles) and electroshock.

If you are deemed mentally incompetent—that is, unable to make rational decisions about your own care—a needle in the butt is the treatment of choice, with people holding you down to ensure compliance. (By the way, they can call you incompetent just for refusing treatment: after all, if you don't understand that you're sick, they have to step in and take care of you.)

So how can you protect yourself from harmful treatments when you're out of it and can't think or communicate clearly?

Representation agreements

Also known as a Ulysses Agreement or living will, a representation agreement is a simple document you can write and sign when you're officially mentally competent, naming someone of your choice to make treatment decisions on your behalf in case you are later labelled incompetent. The document must be witnessed by a notary public.

In your agreement, you can set specific conditions under which certain processes will be put in place. For example, a woman with young children goes off the deep end every few months and starts thinking her parents are evil and want to hurt her kids. When she's with it, she knows very well that her parents love the kids and can take good care of them. So she has an agreement stating that, when she gets locked up, her parents get the kids, even if at the time she's saying that shouldn't happen.

Another thing you can say in a representation agreement is that certain treatments, such as electroshock or particular drugs, are unacceptable to you. But most importantly, you can name another person or people of *your choice* who will take responsibility for various aspects of your life if you are ever unable to do so. Those you name must be adults, and must agree and be able to represent you.

In the absence of such an agreement, your next of kin may be asked to make decisions on your behalf. In many cases this is okay, but sometimes your family members are the very people who had you locked up, and what they think are your "best interests" may have nothing in common with what you actually want or need. An abusive parent or spouse, for example, may think that giving you electroshock—which causes memory loss—is a really good idea.

Representation agreements are not legally binding but, if you're lucky, they might work; some doctors have respected them.

However, I know a woman who had an agreement stating that she should not be drugged with Haldol (a highly toxic chemical commonly given to people labelled psychotic) because she was allergic to it. Unfortunately, she arrived in hospital raving and was immediately admitted and shot up with—guess what?—Haldol. No one bothered to find out that such an agreement was in place. She almost died.

Clearly, if agreements dealing specifically with treatment are to be the least bit effective, enforcement mechanisms are needed. Ideally, you'd be able to register your agreement with every facility you might get locked up in, and they would then look you up on the computer upon arrival and find it, and respect your wishes. Furthermore, you'd have to know in advance that you could do this; some hardy advocate would have to take on the task of publicizing this method of rights protection to ensure that all current and potential mental patients knew about it.

But don't hold your breath waiting for any of this to happen.

Guardianship legislation

Here in BC, new guardianship legislation is in the works which is meant to protect vulnerable people from abuse and neglect. According to a cheery orange booklet from the Community Coalition for the Implementation of Adult Guardianship Legislation, entitled *Going into a Care Facility*, the legislation would give you: "the right to be treated as capable of making decisions unless an assessment decides you are incapable," "the right to get the information you need to make an informed decision," "the right to have information explained in ways you understand" and "the right to choose whether or not to go into a care facility." Only, there's a little box right underneath this list of rights that says: "If you are an involuntary psychiatric patient, this Act does not apply to you... An involuntary psychiatric patient is someone who has been admitted to a psychiatric facility without their consent."

In other words, a group of people in desperate need of such protection—those who are grabbed off the street or from their homes by the police and taken to the hospital because their behaviour is bugging somebody—is shit out of luck. This is because doctors and family groups (such as the Schizophrenia Society—relatives of people labelled schizophrenic) have successfully lobbied to have an "override clause" put into this legislation, especially for us crazies. This means that, while doctors must respect the treatment-related stipulations of anyone else, made while that person is competent, they can "override" (ignore) ours.

Other groups of people prone to systemic abuse have their right to protection acknowledged. The Association for Community Living is a group dominated by professionals and by the family members of people labelled as having learning or developmental disabilities. Yet they are pushing for legislation that protects such people from bad things families and professionals sometimes do to them! The Association recognizes the importance of choice and self-determination, even for people who have trouble communicating or coping.

Mental patients, on the other hand, are seen as dangerous and unable to make choices, thanks to our friends in the media, working hand in hand with the mental health industry. We are so far beyond the pale that our rights can go hang.

The forum

Last spring, advocate and psychiatric survivor Lenny Gagnon put on a community forum in Vancouver, sponsored by the West Coast Mental Health Network, to provide information about the guardianship legislation and representative agreements.

The forum began with the showing of the first few minutes of a video about Berta Michel, whose fiance was diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease shortly before they were to be married. He was put into an institution, where she saw him deteriorate horribly. In the video, she talks about people there being subjected to chemical or physical restraints. She complains that her husband was treated like a mentally ill person. (Most people feel that it's okay to treat "The Mentally Ill" that way, as long as you don't do it to anyone else.)

Michel removed him from the institution, took him off drugs, and set up a loving, supportive, stress-free environment for him and a couple of other people with Alzheimer's in her home. She is convinced that violence in people who have Alzheimer's is produced by stress, so her answer is to reduce the stress. People staying at her house aren't subjected to the irrational rules of institutions. They can get up when they want, sleep when they want, get dressed when they want. They can take it slow. They aren't forced to do anything.

Naturally, the video featured a doctor, to put forth a "balanced" view: it's unreasonable to say that all you need is a comfortable, stress-free home environment as it is to say that all you need is restraints. However, the video showed otherwise. The point was clearly made that an environment of love, care and ease is the best kind of help a person who's lost it can get.

We went on to discuss representation agreements. Gagnon said she'd spoken with Stan Nicol, head of the Society of Notaries Public of BC, and he advised her not to tell people they can just go to any notary with such an agreement and expect to be treated respectfully. Many are prejudiced against people labelled mentally ill, as Nicol himself admits to having been until a couple of years ago when he started working with people who have been so labelled.

Advocate John Shackleton, a psychiatric survivor (someone who has received mental health "services"), spoke about lobbying efforts to get rid of the override clause in the guardianship legislation. Shackleton sits on the Community Coalition on Guardianship Legislation and also on the Representation Agreement Task Group in BC. He said that, more than a year ago, he and two other people went to see the provincial attorney general and the minister of health to ask to

See GUARDIAN, page 20

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XI International Conference on AIDS:

Health, healing, balance

by Diana Gubiseh-Ayala

Diana Gubiseh-Ayala is Cherokee/Taino and works as the Care Coordinator of the American Indian Community House (AICH) HIV/AIDS Project in New York City. She attended the XI International AIDS Conference in Vancouver as a delegate and previously participated at the International AIDS Conference in Berlin in 1993.

The AICH HIV/AIDS Project initially was based only in New York City, but has now expanded to four offices statewide. It provides HIV/AIDS services, health and employement services, and women's wellness circles for Native Americans living in New York state. As well, the Project disseminates information through its community bulletin and other Native American and Two-Spirit publications.

Diana Gubiseh-Ayala provides Kinesis *with her thoughts on this year's Conference, particularly related to indigenous peoples.*

At the XI International Conference on AIDS, I learned a great deal about First Nations culture and how our traditional approach to HIV/AIDS care is very effective. It also gave me an opportunity to meet other Native Americans who are working on the frontlines of HIV/AIDS in their respective communities. In Vancouver, there were ten times as many indigenous people represented than at the AIDS Conference in Berlin.

The indigenous meetings began with a Gathering held at the First Nations Longhouse at the University of British Columbia. The majesty of the traditional carved totems in the four directions of the room was surpassed in beauty only by the full attendance of Aboriginal people from Canada, the United States, Alaska and Hawaii. There was such a diversity of people who work in national, regional and local HIV/AIDS agencies.

In the indigenous workshops, First Nations and Native American panelists addressed the impact of HIV and AIDS in their communities, on reserves/reservations, and in rural and urban areas. We talked about Traditional and Two-Spirit perspectives and shared strategies for achieving good health, healing and balance. By living with respect for Creation, the health of the whole being--that is, the mental, emotional, physical and spiritual--is also respected.

At the opening ceremonies, I was thrilled to see that First Nations people were included and their protocols maintained. *[Prominent leaders of the Musqueam, Squamish and Burrard bands welcomed participants to their territories and performed an opening prayer.]* I was surprised by this because in the US, Native Americans are either excluded from events of this magnitude and importance, or we are merely an afterthought, contacted only on the day before the event when it is too late to participate. Indigenous protocols have never been respected by the United States. As indigenous people, and as human beings, this is one of the most basic of our sovereign birthrights. Governments of the world have historically brought out their artillery over a lot less.

There were several Conference workshops and poster discussions I found particularly interesting. The workshops called, "Plants and Herbs and Uses in Alternative Therapies in the Treatment of HIV/AIDS" and "How to Put The Service Back in Service Organizations" were two long sessions I found informative and interesting, which I can use in my work and share with clients and staff.

A number of Aboriginal organizations including, Pauktuutit (the Inuit Women's Association), the National Native American AIDS Prevention Center, the Chigachimuit Alaskan Native Health Center, and our own Project, also presented poster discussions.

One thing that made me angry was the poor planning of the "Protease Inhibitor" *[newly developed AIDS drugs]* workshop. I arrived moments before the workshop began and was told the room was full. How could the conference coordinators not anticipate this would occur at the single most important workshop on protease inhibitors? Hundreds were left out of that workshop.

Overall, I was very grateful to be present for all the sharing. I learned much and felt great pride in my own service and in being among indigenous and other people from across the continent who have achieved a great deal while serving their communities in this field for so long, amidst the greatest odds and with so little.

Mandatory testing of pregnant women and their infants:

Who are our keepers?

by Diana Gubiseh-Ayala

The issue of mandatory testing for HIV/AIDS of pregnant women was a controversial issue raised in several sessions at the International AIDS Conference concerning transmission of HIV/AIDS, particularly since just prior to the Conference, the American Medical Association had issued its endorsement of mandatory testing. Below, Diana Gubiseh-Ayala provides a critical analysis of mandatory testing laws, and looks at the current legislation being debated in the New York legislative assembly.

Earlier this year, Native women from the American Indian Community House joined a group of Asian, African-American and Latina women from New York City in journeying to the State Legislative Office in Albany to challenge a proposed bill requiring all pregnant women to be tested for HIV/AIDS.

Those of us who went included women who are HIV positive with children, service providers to HIV positive women, and their attorneys who helped organize a campaign against the bill.

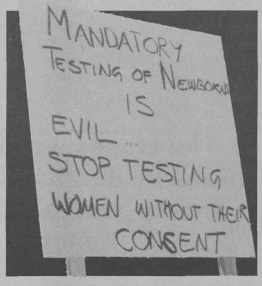
The bill, introduced by New York State Assemblywoman Nettie Mayersohn in 1993, called for New York State Department of Health to "unblind" the results of studies that have been conducted on newborns for the purpose of tracking the statistics on total occurrence of HIV prevalence in newborns. *["Unblinding" would mean the results would not be anonymous and would be associated with the names of the mothers and newborns.]*

Mayersohn has stated that the goal of the bill is to ensure that HIV-infected newborns receive treatment for Pneumocystis Carinii Pneumonia (PCP) *[one of the AIDS-specific illnesses and the only opportunistic disease developed in newborns testing HIV positive.]* The bill also called for informing the mother, as well as the father, if the child is HIV seropositive.

There are a number of concerns with mandatory testing of pregnant women, including that:

- Mandatory testing of newborns and mothers does not equal mandatory care. (The Mayersohn bill contains no provisions ensuring that mothers identified as HIV positive or their babies will receive care and services.)
- Mandatory testing does not stop the spread of HIV.
- This bill poses a threat to the constitutional rights of women to equal protection, due process, and privacy. (The bill means that every woman giving birth can be tested for HIV without her written consent and without counselling.)
- Women and children may face the risk of exposure to domestic violence from forced disclosure of their HIV status to the child's father, as required by the Mayersohn bill.

A baby born to an HIV-positive woman may test positive, but may ***not*** actually be infected. In fact, because newborns continue to develop their own immune system a year and a half after birth, so many babies later test HIV-negative. Studies in the US show that only 25 to 35 percent of HIV-positive women transmit the virus to their children.



HIV-antibody counselling and voluntary testing of pregnant women during their pre-natal care, or before pregnancy, is a better way than mandatory testing to getting women into care and reduce their chances of contracting the virus. However, it cannot be presumed that the standard of care providing early intervention and clinical treatment will be available for HIV positive pregnant women and infants, particularly those who are homeless or living in poverty, or for Native American women and women of colour. These women are already under-served and often denied access to care by the medical and social service community.

Earlier this year, when the Ryan White Emergency CARE Act was renewed, the federal government showed it is moving towards mandatory testing. The Act allocates a certain amount of federal health care dollars for HIV/AIDS care. But the renewed Act also includes an amendment authorizing care facilities to try and persuade pregnant women to get tested voluntarily and to provide the women mandatory counselling. This really is just a substitute amendment—the real goal of the government is to implement mandatory testing.

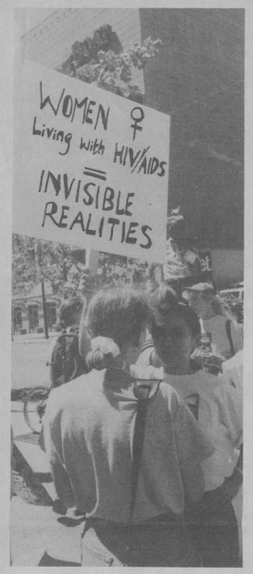
The Institute of Medicine will conduct surveys on the success of voluntary testing and mandatory counselling. If the results do not satisfy the federal Health and Human Services Secretary, then that body will re-submit a bill requiring all States to institute mandatory testing.

The Mayersohn bill made it past the committee stage and is now before the full Assembly—the House of Representatives and the Senate—for final voting. All but a couple of legislators who could have made a difference in defeating the bill, at the committtee level, allowed themselves to trade their commitment to the public for political back-scratching during late night phone calls.

If passed, New York State would be the first jurisdiction in the US with mandatory testing laws. And once passed, it could set a dangerous precedent for similar policies to be passed in other states.

Women living with HIV/Aids:

Making connections: the socio-economic face of AIDS



by Karen Lyons as told to Fatima Jaffer

Karen Lyons is an HIV-positive lesbian, mother and activist living in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She is a support group leader for HIV Positive Youth at a service centre for runaway youth, and volunteers at WISDOM (Women with Immune-Systems Disorders Organizing and Meeting) and a peer-education program with Project TEACH (Treatment Education Activists Combatting HIV) in low-income communities of people of colour living with HIV.

Founded by a community-based research organization, Project TEACH focuses on prevention, treatment education, outreach and advocacy. Under one program, members of Project TEACH translate scientific terms used in HIV/AIDS research and treatments into language that can be easily understood by those who do not have a scientific background.

Karen Lyons co-presented this material at one session during the XIth International Conference on AIDS. The presentation was titled "An Assay is a Test: Women Living with HIV and Activists Helping Researchers Communicate with People Living with HIV."

Kinesis *spoke with Lyons at the Conference.*

Fatima Jaffer: Could you tell me about WISDOM?

Karen Lyons: When I was diagnosed in 1989, I went to a support group. I went for a few weeks, and it was always guys so I wouldn't say anything. One of the guys said, "Karen, you've been here for a while and you ain't talking about nothing." I told them, "Well, I don't think you can help me with my problem." Our issues [as HIV positive women] were different from theirs.

They gave me the number for another woman, Lorraine, who would come through the centre now and again. We connected and 'Raine said, "It'd be nice if we could form our own organization." And that's how WISDOM came about.

We had applied for funding but were turned down numerous times. A doctor who works in the HIV/AIDS clinic knew his clinic was not equipped to deal with the emotional needs and problems of HIV-positive women. He also knew we were trying to form WISDOM, so he went into his pocket and gave us the money to start with.

Since then, we've been operating with a private donation here or there, a thousand here or there. Nothing like a lot of other organizations. Basically the money covers needs like car fare, lunch money, transit tokens, childcare for a day, that sort of thing.

We've been around for about four-and-one-half years, and now we have a grant of about $20,000.

We were specifically designed to take care of the needs of a newly diagnosed woman. What we found was there were a lot of women who had been diagnosed HIV-positive but were not seeking services. We go out to the community, let them know we're here, and give counselling and testing.

We also help them with issues of disclosure because that's a big problem. I've met women who've known they are HIV-positive for over five years and haven't told anyone but me. How do you tell your family, a mate? Some women haven't told their partner and it has to do with fears he may leave and you need his support to keep the house in order.

Women have a lot of different issues. There are a lot of women in recovery [from alcohol and/or drug use] and Philadelphia is not equipped to handle women in addiction. Often, a woman has to make the decision if she wants to seek long term treatments of giving up her child. I tell them that's one of the things they've got to think about.

Jaffer: I heard someone at this conference say that, for many of the women diagnosed with HIV in the "third world," both outside North America and in low-income situations here, HIV is just one more thing on the list of problems...

Lyons:...yes, poverty, drug problems, social problems, racism...all this existed before AIDS came along. Often if a woman is working, she's making $4 or $5 an hour. She doesn't have time to do other things like worry about her health. For women in relationships where the mate is sick, she has to care for him [or her] and for the children, and be the breadearner. That's so stressful.

In a lot of the women who come to WISDOM, the disease progressed further because of stress—not knowing how to manage stress, not having an outlet to deal with it. And on top of it, the silence is kept because a lot of people are still homophobic and because AIDS is still associated with gay men and drug addicts.

Jaffer: At a conference like this, while there are a lot of good things being raised, it doesn't as a whole make the connections between socio-economic factors and HIV/AIDS. It's almost as if there's the whole world out there, and then there's HIV/AIDS separate...

Lyons: Yes, and what I find is the different services women need are vast and require a lot of money. Funding, especially in Philadelphia, is being cut dramatically. The issues we are hearing at this conference around childcare, death and dying issues, housing, drug addiction, schooling are all great ideas, but who's going to give the money so we can deal with them.

In Philadelphia now, agencies fight among themselves for money. And Philadelphia is seeing about 80 percent of the new infections [in Pennsylvania,] but we are only receiving 20 percent of the money [from the state for HIV/AIDS projects.] And that 20 percent has to be divided among about 30 organizations. When we're at each other's throats over the money, it hinders the service clients get.

Jaffer: Your presentation dealt with teaching members of the medical establishment to talk to their patients, especially low income African Americans and other peoples of colour. Could you tell us how the medical community in Philadelphia works with WISDOM and other organizations for people of colour with HIV/AIDS?

Lyons: You go into a doctor's office and you're treated differently for whatever the reason—stigma, racism—and people feel that. Most people of colour, especially Black people, will wait until whatever is going on with them gets to a point where they can't function daily, and then they'll wind up in somebody's emergency room.

A lot of medical people and doctors are biased. For example, one of the women of WISDOM went to the hospital to have an operation on her foot. She was laying on the table, and before they administered the [anaesthetic,] they were looking at the abscesses on her legs. She told them, "I got infected through my husband." The doctor laughed and said, "Who the hell do you think you're talking to. D'you think I'm stupid. With all them abscesses on you?" But the truth is, she did get infected through her husband. She got married at 14 to a guy who was about 25. The guy had a drug problem and at 16, she was getting high through him. She didn't know how to stick herself [with a syringe], he always stuck her. She never prostituted, never [trafficked] drugs; her husband got her high as long as she took care of the household.

This experience has hindered her from going to a doctor. She told me, "I felt so low when I was laying there, and they laughed right in front of my face." We hate to admit it but doctors are human—they are biased, they are racist, they have their own predjudices, and it hinders us from seeking the care that we need.

The group I work with wants to have a debate with the medical community about clinical research and why protocols are not set up or designed for women. I found out that if a woman is of child-bearing age, she cannot participate in a trial [for new AIDS drugs, or any medications]. But now even though [that] law has been overturned, I still have a hard time convincing people of colour to participate in trials. One reason is racism. Most people of colour feel medical science will use us as guinea pigs.

Last fall, we sponsored something in Philadelphia called, "I don't want to be a guinea pig," and we had the community come in and talk about a variety of issues. We explained to them that clinical research is important. I asked them, "How did you think that you got to a point where you could take these drugs? Somebody had to be the one to participate in a trial in order for them to work effectively on you today."

Then often when people participate in trials, most won't understand the terminology. After they come out of the research-er's room, I ask them, "You can be honest with me, did you fully understand what the doctor told you?" They say, "We understood." Then I ask them, "Tell me what an 'arm' means because I know that was on one of the consent forms you just signed. And 'placebo'?" Then they'll say they really didn't understand, so I explain [the terminology and procedures] to them, and in a way they'll get it.

If a person's an addict, they know what it's like to get a burn bag. They go home and find out, "Goddamit, it's sugar." That's a placebo.

There are also plenty of people of colour who are taking protease inhibitors and don't know how to take them. A lot of people who are uneducated don't know what the instructions the doctor gives them mean. So I sit down and tell them how the drugs work. I explain to them that if you don't take the medication properly, you can build up a resistance so that no other protease inhibitor will work for you.

The issues we are hearing at this conference around childcare, death and dying issues, housing, drug addiction, schooling are all great ideas, but who's going to give the money so we can deal with them?

I understand doctors really don't have the time. If we have one or two doctors in the clinic in a day, he may have 75 patients coming in. He doesn't have the time to sit down and explain to you in detail the way I might do.

Jaffer: Seems like doctors don't have the expertise either to explain it the way you can; they don't live the clients' lives, or know their lives.

Lyons: One of the things we advocate is you have to go to the communities and ask them what works for that particular community. For example, they had sent me to a high school in southwest Philadelphia to talk to kids. And after the presentation was over, the teacher said, "Well hey, I want to take you into a special room, we have some foreign kids here. They know no English and I want you to talk to them." So I went into the room and said 'hi' to them, and we got to talking. I said, "Do you understand me?" And they said, "Not really." So I asked the teacher where these kids are from? "Nigeria, Ghana, Uganda..." I told the teacher that I don't speak their languages. They assumed just because I'm Black...

It's the same with Asians, who come from different cultures, speak different languages. You can't assume they're all Chinese, beacuse they are Korean, Vietnamese, Laotian, and so on. But the only Asian literature on HIV/AIDS we have in Philadelphia caters to Chinese people. Then the [doctors] panicked when [Asians] started becoming infected at an alarming rate and wondered why the literature was not working.

Did they ever go to them to ask what works for their communities? Doctors constantly make decisions for other people without asking them first, and then two years later, after they've spent millions of dollars, they come crying to the community about things not going right. We need to be involved from the planning stage up. Don't come to us afterwards...and that way maybe you'll save a few million dollars. It's a waste.

Jaffer: Is that one of the messages you are bringing to this conference? Why are you here?

Lyons: I wanted to network, I wanted to see if other countries were going through similar things that we were going through, I'm glad I made some connections with the Asian population because I explained that we have nothing in Philadelphia for people from different Asian communities. We had a city meeting last month and the Asian community came in and said they are getting infected at a rapid rate and that none of the material is geared towards them, women and men.

Now in Philadelphia, we don't even have books in our inner city school systems. We've got $30 million in our education budget, but we don't have books. But when I go up to the white suburbs, everybody's got books. The government would rather spend $30,000 to house a young Black man in prison instead of activities in the neighbourhood, job training in the neighbourhood.

There are the issues we have to work on and often I find, when working with HIV positive women, that I have to cope with issues to do with self-esteem, the environment they're in–there's a whole realm of things before I can even get to [HIV/AIDS].

In the Black community, a lot has been suppressed for so long, that a lot of issues are starting to come up. When I go to schools to talk, although I'm supposed to talk about HIV and AIDS, a lot of my talk has to do with self-esteem. If I can't boost your self-esteem, then there's nothing I can say to you about AIDS because you're going to still practise the same stuff you've been practising.

AIDS is after all a multibillion dollar industry and if they found a cure today, hundreds of thousands of people around the world would be out of a job. So there's really no big rush.

Jaffer: This is similar to what the women from "third world" countries are talking about.

Lyons: Yeah. It amazes me how our issues are so similar. Often women are on welfare and they say, "If I get off welfare and get a job, I can't do a helluva lot with the $5 an hour minimum wage I'll get a job at MacDonald's or at a factory. For $5 anhour...but then the daycare goes, then the medicare goes..."You're lucky if, after taxes, you bring home $150 [a month]. How are you gonna pay electric/gas, phone bills, food on $150 a month? Even if you get the job, who's gonna watch the kids?

Often we sponsor retreats and things to get women out of that environment—no kids, no nothing—just to give them a few days to unwind. Then maybe I could sit down and talk to them about some issues.

Jaffer: Are other women's organizations doing this kind of work?

Lyons: WISDOM is the first and only organization for women [of colour] in Pennsylvania. We are six women now. Several of us have died. I find myself on a lot of days saying "I can't go on." But then I'll get that call: "Hey Karen, how you doing? I'm fine. I've enrolled in school, girl, and da da da," or "I've graduated and I've got that job...and girl, I never thought I'd be making $10/hour." and "Yeah, we're gonna move outta here, and I've got a down payment on a house." That's my signal to just go on.

I was stressed so much last year. My lover was dying and I was working and trying to care for her, her daughter and her grandkids. When she died, I gave up my apartment and got a house so I could take her kids. And right after, I was laid out—I couldn't walk.

They ran all kind of tests in the hospital, and everthing came up negative. My doctor came in and said it was stress. He said, "For 30 days, you don't want no speaking engagements, no peer patients, no phone calls. I want you to have total rest."

I haven't been in hospital since. So now, when I get to that point, I cut off and go do fun things and try and take my mind off of my work because it can be very stressful especially when you have six women doing the job of a hundred.

Jaffer: Could you talk about the support you get being a lesbian?

Lyons: If you are HIV positive, there's very little support from the lesbian community. Often you hear, "That's what she gets for sleeping with men," or "She's messing with drugs," and this and that.

There's an organization called Sister Space which has a midwestern thing where about 1000 women get together on 1000 acres of land in Pennsylvania for camping, canoeing, workshops. For the past four years, WISDOM has sponsored a workshop on HIV/AIDS, safer sex, lesbian issues and all that, and maybe two or three out of 1000 women would show up. We let go trying.

Jaffer: I've been quite surprised by the number of HIV-positive lesbians who are here at this conference from all over the world. It's interesting that there is such a lack of interest in HIV/AIDS as a lesbian [women's] issue, rather than as a lesbian and gay issue.

Lyons: Yeah. Most don't seem to want to know. We certainly don't get the support from lesbians that gay men give each other. We're isolated, looked at as dirty. But we just go on.

You know the CDC [Centre for Disease Control] definition of a lesbian is someone who hasn't had sex with a man since 1977. So if you're 22 years old and had sex with a man three years ago, then you're not [officially] a lesbian. If I said I had sex with a man eight years ago and I'm HIV positive, as far as they're concerned, that's how I got it and they don't care about nothing else. How many lesbians do you know who haven't had sex with a man for 20 years?

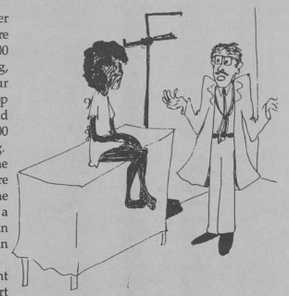
We don't even have material in Philadelphia in relation to lesbians. We just formed a new commission and they're finding a lot of lesbians are coming out as HIV-positive and that their needs for support are not catered to. So they've decided to have material geared specifically to lesbians. There hasn't been money for that before. It's a shame that the only way we can get the help we need is if they count us and find there's a lot of us. Then there's money.

It's a political thing. AIDS is after all a multibillion dollar industry and if they found a cure today, hundreds of thousands of people around the world would be out of a job. So there's really no big rush. A lot of what I'm hearing at this conference I've heard over and over again at American conferences and meetings...It's the same old talk. Nothing's getting done.

Jaffer: So what makes the difference then is not a conference like this but the activism on the ground and organizations like WISDOM?

Lyons: The activism on the ground is what is going to make things happen. People are dying in Philadelphia left and right. I hate to say it, but it's that kind of motivation—your lover dying, your sister, or whoever—that will make people wake up and say, "Well, dang, maybe I need to get involved," or "Maybe I need to look at people who are HIV-positive a little differently now."

When it's your sister or daughter, it's no longer "them." It's knocking on your door, ma'am.



" in lay terms? I don't even know any lay terms!"

HIV/AIDS and human rights:

Broadening the definition

by Kagendo Murungi
as told to E. Centime Zeleke

Kagendo Murungi is a Kenyan lesbian living in San Francisco. She works as a program associate at IGLHRC, the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission. She attended the XI International Conference on AIDS as a delegate and spoke to Kinesis *about HIV/AIDS and human rights issues.*

E. Centime Zeleke: One would assume that IGLHRC's mandate is to advocate on behalf of gays and lesbians, yet the organization also works with people who are HIV positive. How and why does your group work on human rights issues with respect to people who are HIV positive?

Kagendo Murungi: Our mission does include work on issues of HIV and AIDS. Specifically, we work on issues of gender identity, sexual orientation, and HIV/AIDS. As an organization working on sexual orientation issues, it was clear to us how belonging to a specific marginalized group, such as gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgendered people, predisposes people to a high incidence of HIV and AIDS, and so it's a natural part of the work we do.

Zeleke: Can you talk about the specific human rights issues IGLHRC has articulated as important in relation to people who are HIV positive or living with AIDS, and particularly for women?

Murungi: Issues that have been articulated to us by grassroots organizations we work with include: discriminatory immigration laws in different countries, including the US, death threats, bombings of hospices for people with HIV and AIDS, mandatory HIV testing, and the distribution of condoms in prisons being prevented.

Zeleke: How about vaccine trials?

Murungi: At the AIDS conference in Vancouver, there was an issue of a drug that had been tested on people in India where a number of them died. The question that comes up from this case is: how can these trials be monitored? What human rights standards can be applied? For example, if it's just an issue of money and if having money means you can do anything you want in any developing country, how can that be policed?

Cases like this one highlight the inequalities that exist and the framework of our human rights response to HIV/AIDS. We have to come out of the academic mode and look at long term solutions. What that means is looking at the preconditions that exist that make people susceptible to AIDS/HIV, such as racism, poverty, the impact of colonialism, global economic discrepancies, and so on. These are the things that need to be focused on outside of just advocating for people's civil and political rights in response to specific abuses.

Zeleke: Given that the standards of human rights have been defined by white men and are based on an individual rights model, fighting for human rights has often meant fighting for the right to buy a Coke or to have the "choice" to become massive consumers of multinational products. What kinds of choices does that leave us? How has IGLHRC worked to open up the definition of human rights to encompass the multiple realities that people live in, as women, as people of colour, as people living in poverty, *et cetera*.

Murungi: I should start by acknowledging that what you said is absolutely true. Traditional human rights application and language is limited. Because of that decontextualized individualism, it's assumed that each "man" has the right to xyz. That's a bias IGLHRC has also been guilty of in some of our work, focusing more on advocating for civil and political rights at the expense of economic and social rights, because those are more difficult things.

But because of the strategies we use, we are taken out of that mainstream human rights organizational model. Our work is informed by what specific local and national activists want. What we do is support, campaign and lend resources. Sometimes it's information or access to funding; more often it's requests for actual equipment. We do not use a top down human rights model where we say, "here are the human rights and we're going to impose them on you." It's more about finding out how can we lend our resources to support people in their communities.

In the past, when other international gay and lesbian organizations or other international human rights organizations have dived into places, we have refrained from doing particular actions because we have not heard back from local activists. We don't just utilize United Nations conventions. We find out what the local laws are, what the national constitution says, if there's a powerful religious leader or other figure that activists in that country feel might support their campaign...We have a very wide open approach and we focus on issues and organizations that have been ignored by the more traditional human rights organizations.

Zeleke: Let's go back to the whole issue of the economic rights of people. One thing that's interesting about human rights organizations is that they don't look at economic rights. I think the single most dangerous assault on women's rights in the US is the attack on social programs. Does IGLHRC have a position on this.

Murungi: We do within our practice, and of course fundamentally, acknowledge economic issues as impacting the lives of people and specifically the lives of women.

One interesting discussion that came out of [the 4th World Conference on Women in] Beijing concerned the focus of a lot of people on "negative rights"—the right not to be violated. One of the things IGLHRC brought from our perspective of doing sexuality-based work was that people have positive rights as well. Of course it's not all so simplistic and there were major dialogues on these issues.

Zeleke: Has IGLHRC made any statements on the attack on social programs. I don't think you directly answered that.

Murungi: We are in coalition with various groups in the US that do that kind of work, as well as work on immigration rights. We're launching a project focusing even more on economic and social rights issues called, "HIV/AIDS Health and Human Rights Initiative." We're going to be working more closely with women's development and reproductive rights groups, and focusing not just on international but on national strategies as well.

Kagendo Murungi (right) and Rachel Rosenbloom at the Positive Women's Network gathering for the AIDS Conference. ***Photo by Fatima Jaffer***

IGLHRC definitely recognizes the limitations of traditional human rights practice and is not prepared to fall into the same trappings of focusing just on civil and political rights, so, of course, we focus on other kinds of rights as well.

Zeleke: Some of the issues raised in relation to HIV and AIDS in Beijing were the discrepancy of power between men and women, increasing violence against women, the growing feminization of poverty, and the lack of access to health care services. Does IGLHRC work on these issues and others like them?

Murungi: The brief answer to that is yes. Why? Because in order to have something more than just band-aid solutions, a couple of things have to happen. There has to be appropriate public health policy; that is, public health policy which does not designate in a racist and/or homophobic way high risk groups but rather focuses on high risk activities, and which actually does broad-based education campaigns on how the virus is transmitted.

It's also impossible for anyone to attain good health if they're living in an environment that discriminates against them. If we talk about poor people, if we talk about women, if we talk about sexual minorities, we must list the ways in which these groups are discriminated against. That's something that has to be tackled along with making sure that someone has access to treatment and the broader public is educated.

Zeleke: In terms of being a monitoring organization and putting pressure on third world governments, you have said that IGLHRC looks to find who are the influential people in the communities and put pressure on them. Don't you think IGLHRC is replicating some of the power dynamics between the north and south, particularly when in the US, you've got somebody like [Republican presidential candidate Bob] Dole who probably would have nothing to do with gays and lesbians if he could help it? Do you want to comment on that?

Murungi: Recently, we've been seeing a homophobic policing [of IGLHRC] in a local San Francisco newspaper which interestingly enough makes that very same argument. They were attacking someone who was aligned with us saying, "God, what is with these people, they're trying to tell the prime minister of the "former Rhodesia" [Robert Mugabe] that he can't outlaw homosexuality in his own country."

If gay and lesbian citizens in a particular country call on us to support them in an initiative they feel is going to actually make them citizens or improve their human rights situation, then it is our responsibility to do whatever is in our power—working closely with them—to support their local strategies. That's our strategy, rather than saying, "Hey, we're a US based organization and this is how US organizations do activism, and therefore you have to do it this way: you have to have a rally outside Mugabe's office and use tactics that well known HIV and AIDS organizations in the US and other western countries use."

Zeleke: At the AIDS Conference, there was a bit of a kerfuffle over an action called by some prostitutes' rights organizations and Act-Up. They wanted to hold an action against a Burmese delegate who was going to give a presentation. The groups were saying that everybody should turn away from him when he came into the room because of a massacre of HIV-positive prostitutes in Burma. I know some people thought the action wasn't appropriate because nobody knew who this government delegate was, what the repercussions on him would be, or if the evidence of the massacre had been corroborated...

Murungi: I'll jump right in by saying that one reason we were not involved in that action was because of how problematic it was. The people who called for it simply wanted to highlight how sex workers have been discriminated against historically; they had no concern whatsoever for the Burmese situation historically or presently and were very ill-informed about the issue itself. This shows the lack of political savvy and that is, I feel, an example of irresponsible international action. That action was an illustration of a direct imperialist approach without any sign of appreciation for how complicated the whole issue is.

For more information on the work of IGLHRC, contact them at #200-1360 Mission St, San Francisco, California, 94103 USA; tel: (415) 255-8680; fax: (415) 255-8662; e-mail: IGLHRC@IGLHRC.ORG.

E. Centime Zeleke is a Vancouver-based Ethiopian feminist activist.

AIDS, from page 3

National AIDS Strategy (NAS), a $42 million, ten-year commitment to address personal and societal issues brought on by HIV infection and AIDS in Canada. The NAS is set to expire in 1998. The federal government has so far refused to commit to renewing the strategy.

The march brought together over a thousand AIDS activists, gay men, lesbians, and members of the Aboriginal, people of colour and women's communities *[see photo]*. Although billed as "not a protest march," most of the (white, male) organizers appeared more concerned with imparting the political message—"Shame, shame, shame Canada, renew the NAS"—to the media, than on supporting the needs or issues of people attending the demonstration. A media scrum hid the speakers from the crowd and made it difficult to hear them. Many demonstrators standing on the fringes drifted off. One Aboriginal woman complained that the organizers were unwilling to accommodate or respect the wishes or memories of AIDS activists. Helen Johnson had asked the organizers if she could sing a song before the demonstration got started in memory of her brother, an Aboriginal AIDS activist and founder of Healing our Spirit, Vancouver's Aboriginal AIDS organization. She was refused.

The Conference opens

The protest to get the NAS renewed continued at the three-and-a-half-hour-long opening ceremonies that evening. About a thousand people stood with their backs turned to federal Health Minister David Dingwall who delivered the keynote address. Dingwall was standing in for Prime Minister Jean Chretien, who is the first head of a host country ever to refuse to attend an international AIDS conference. Chretien was rumoured to be on vacation.

The opening held other interesting moments. The very first speech was given by a woman living with HIV, Doreen Millman, an active member of Vancouver's Positive Women's Network. Millman drew a standing ovation when she said, "How did a 63-year-old grandmother from North Vancouver get AIDS? The answer is very simple. It does not matter."

There was also a call by activists for pharmaceutical companies to drop drug prices. In his speech, Eric Sawyer, the founder of New York's Act-Up, accused drug companies of killing people by charging exorbitant prices that limit access to treatment for most people living with HIV/AIDS, especially in developing nations. Many in the audience joined Sawyer in chanting "Greed kills, access for all," while throwing photocopied US$20 bills with "AIDS profiteers: Greed = Death" into the audience.

Who was there

The Vancouver conference brought together scientists, academics, researchers, and drug company executives. It also accommodated an unprecedented number of activists, people with HIV/AIDS and community workers, due, in part, to the amount of scholarship monies (about $2.5 million) raised, which allowed 1,076 delegates to be fully or partially funded to the Conference. (Registration alone cost about $1250, and delegate needs included monies for travel, food and accomodation.)

However, because monies were raised largely from Western-based agencies and corporations, and because for the first time the World Health Organization and major United Nations agencies, such as UNICEF and UNESCO, provided no monies for scholarships, fewer people from developing countries were able to attend as might have otherwise.

The next four days were a maze of sessions, presentations, and speeches. There was a drug "trade show" at BC Place Stadium, which also served as the exhibition hall for poster and other displays, literature and booths of non-governmental organizations from around the world. The central and largest sections of the stadium were occupied by multinational drug companies marketing their wares to hospital administrators, doctors and people living with HIV/AIDS. In some cases, the drug companies had built elaborate two-tiered, carpeted, structures with small lecture rooms where one could experience multimedia demonstrations of the latest medical discoveries funded and marketed by the company.

Conference agendas

The Conference program was divided into four tracks. Track A dealt with "Basic Science," where researchers and scientists presented the latest discoveries in the laboratory, from new information about the molecular structure of HIV, to the testing of different chemicals and drugs in test tubes. There was a fair amount of debate and excitement at these sessions as scientists came up with new information on such discoveries as chemokines—chemical messengers that work with CD4 cells to prevent HIV from entering blood cells.

Track B was called "Clinical Science," referring to the sciences that research and develop clinical care and the medical management of HIV. Presentations were made on studies that tracked the health progress of people taking different combinations of new and existing drugs. Drugs known as nucleoside and non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors and protease inhibitors, as well as clinical facts around viral load and drug toxicities were discussed in these busy sessions.

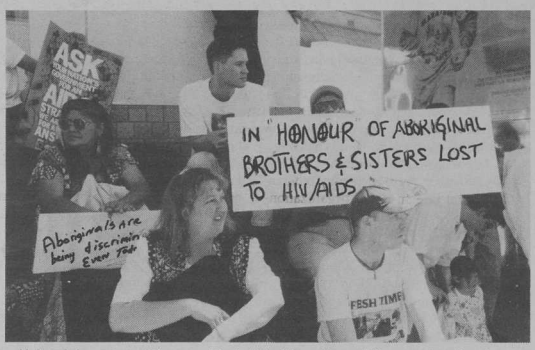
Sessions in both tracks A and B tended to be fairly high-tech, with language that indicated they were geared towards the academics, scientists, and doctors. I was, though, impressed with the large number of activists who displayed the required amount of expertise to be able to follow the proceedings. However, little room was left for debate or dialogue between scientists, academics and doctors, and lay people.

Track C was titled "Epidemiology and Public Health" and basically consisted of studies and papers looking at who gets HIV/AIDS, why, where, how many, and how HIV has evolved as a disease. Also covered were strategies to slow down or eventually stop the disease, using various education, prevention and outreach methods. For example, we heard evidence of which prevention programs worked or did not work in Palestinian refugee camps, or for women in the US inner cities. We also heard results of studies which found a high prevalence of HIV in sex trade workers in India and among cocaine smokers recruited on the streets of Canadian cities.

Track D was titled, "Social Science, Research, Policy and Action," and covered the impact and responses by individuals, families, governments and communities to HIV/AIDS. Sessions looked at ethical dilemmas around clinical trials in third world countries, issues for women, AIDS and human rights, why women use the female condom, HIV-risk behaviour in youth, and the connections between AIDS activism, illness and the politics of identity.

Both tracks C and D attracted higher numbers of women, people of colour, members of Aboriginal communities, and people from third world countries, both as audience and presenters.

The Conference organizers had also highlighted three "pathways," or areas of interest, that ran through the four tracks—Women and HIV, Development and HIV, and Living with HIV. Sessions dealing with the pathways tended to occur more often in tracks C and D than in A and B, which did not study, for example, the effects of drugs on women as opposed to men, except where pregnancy was involved.



Helen Johnson and Florence Hackett hold up signs at the opening day demo.

Overall, track D sent a clear message that community-based action and research, and peer-led programs need strengthening. As well, programs that looked beyond the issues of HIV to develop a broader focus were more effective, such as those which dealt with injection drug use, sex work and HIV; or male bisexuality, sex work and HIV; or lesbians, injection drug use and HIV.

Another message was that most research and intervention programs, unless done by women, continue to ignore the ways in which women are particularly vulnerable to HIV or tend to re-invent the wheel by spending huge amounts of money to survey areas already over-researched *[see story on page 4.]*

Much of the information in this track seemed to confirm what most women and communities already knew.

The feminist voice

In all, the Conference saw a record amount of research being done by women, both HIV-negative and HIV-positive, or in collaboration with academic researchers. Much of this work was in the area of HIV transmission. However, much of the research related to pregnant women and the risks of transmission of HIV to the foetus, or on women as sex trade workers, once again categorizing women as transmitters of disease and "walking wombs."

And, as lesbian delegates repeatedly pointed out in various sessions on theme of Women and HIV, discussions around lesbians were almost completely absent. The only presentation to look at incidence of HIV in lesbians and woman-to-woman transmission was by the UK's Terrence Higgins Trust, a gay and lesbian AIDS organization. The presenter, Robin Gorna, challenged the ten or 15 women who made it to the presentation, by arguing that latex for lesbians is an alarmist and an inadequate safer sex strategy.

Contrary to the absence of lesbian material in the Conference sessions, there was a sizeable presence of lesbians at the Conference, many of them HIV-positive. In sessions and outside, they challenged the notion that lesbians are not at risk for HIV, pointing out the high incidence of lesbians who are injection drug users, and/or sex trade workers, and/or who sleep with men. They were unanimous in calling on lesbians to talk to each other more openly and honestly about sex and HIV.

Overall, a clear feminist voice was absent from the Conference, even though there were a number of feminist activists in attendance. The only spaces for women to debate or discuss analyses and strategies among themselves were created outside the formal Conference structure.

One satellite symposium—a caucus for women working on HIV/AIDS issues—was organized by the Western-dominated International Community of Women Living with HIV/AIDS (ICW) together with the broader International Women's AIDS Caucus. Participants expressed dismay that even with a "pathway" on Women and HIV, there was a gaping lack of attention to women's issues as a whole in the Conference. One of the organizers of the next International AIDS Conference, to be held in Geneva, was present at the symposium and noted the concerns and promised to do something more at the Geneva Conference.

Another more informal space for women from the Conference to interact as well as to meet local feminists, HIV-positive women and women AIDS activists was provided by the Positive Women's Network. Despite tight schedules and the venue's distance from the Conference site, several hundred women from all over the world made it to network, converse, and share ideas.

By the end of the Conference, I did get a glimmer of hope: I realized that while many of those I had heard present papers at the Conference seemed oblivious or resistant to the idea that HIV/AIDS affects women and poor people differently, or that sexism is rampant in medical, academic and some activist establishments, it was hard to totally ignore the message that the fight against AIDS is as much about ending poverty, ending violence against women, and ending the inequality of women, as it is about eliminating a virus.

And so ultimately then, fighting HIV/AIDS is also about the need to continue to work together across communities and socially progressive and responsible movements for social change.

Fatima Jaffer is a Kenyan-born, South Asian lesbian feminist activist living in Vancouver.
Thanks to Prudence Mabele, Agnes Huang, Kagendo Murungi and E. Centime Zeleke for their help in preparing this report. Special thanks to Nancy Pang and the Positive Women's Network for information and support.

Women and the information highway:

Whose road, whose rules?

by Penny Goldsmith

NATTERING ON THE NET: Women, Power and Cyberspace
by Dale Spender
Garamond Press Ltd, Toronto, Ontario

WHOSE BRAVE NEW WORLD? The Information Highway and the New Economy
by Heather Menzies
Between the Lines, Toronto, Ontario

Recently, I was interviewed on a radio show as a prelude to a workshop called "Serfing or Surfdom: Women on the Internet" I was facilitating at a computer conference in Vancouver. The woman interviewing me asked the usual questions about harassment and pornography online, favourite web sites and finished by querying why were there so few women on line. To the last question, I quipped, "perhaps because we're smart." At that point, the interviewer got quite upset and accused me with some vehemence of being a Luddite. My reaction to Dale Spender's *Nattering on the Net* and Heather Menzies' *Whose Brave New World?* will probably have Spender, at least, agreeing with the radio interviewer.

Although Spender's book is subtitled "Women, Power and Cyberspace," most of it is about the history of writing, literature and education and its various participants and audiences; only one chapter is specifically about women online (although Spender refers to women's role in each of the other chapters).

Spender has lived most of her life in the world of books. She is an international expert in the fields of language and communications and the author and editor of over thirty books, including *Man Made Language* and *Women of Ideas*. And now she is a convert to cyberspace.

Spender begins her book with the history of print and the myth of objectivity in man-made language, including the birth of the dictionary. She goes on to debunk the idea that literature provides any truths, because it has always been controlled by a certain segment of society. She claims that "because there is no place for a single, exclusive, standard in the new global networks, the canon and much of the justification for literature now have little credibility."

Spender talks about readers and the growth of a reading public, the birth of the author, and then her or his death. She asks if there will be a role for the author at all, if the information highway democratizes authorship and makes writing a collaborative process.

She also talks about education, the new role for students and the death of the traditional teacher, and provides an analysis of indexing and why it is not objective, any more than dictionaries are.

Finally Spender gets specifically to women in cyberspace. There is a lot of depressing information about how girls still don't use computers as much as boys (this was confirmed by the women in my recent workshop). There is a large section about sexual harassment online and various ways that this issue has been and should be dealt with.

The first six chapters provide an interesting and sometimes controversial retrospective of communications techniques through time. The chapter on women, power and cyberspace examines the problems for women because of the fact that men (predominantly white, middle-class Californians according to her) are still writing the rules of the road. Spender offers suggestions for women who are not online: she urges women to see the computer as a means of communication—"nattering on the net."

What I disagree with in this book is Spender's assumption that somehow or other, in spite of her awareness about the limits of access, the information highway is a democratizing tool. In the introduction, she says:

"Women—and Indigenous people and those with few resources—cannot afford to be marginalized or excluded from this new medium. To do so will be to risk becoming information-poor. It will be to not count; to be locked out of full participation in society in the same way that illiterate people have been disenfranchised in the print world."

But she only touches on access and equity in two and a half pages in the conclusion, and this I think is a major flaw. Spender is aware of barriers to access and equity she mentions them in passing in each chapter, but they feel like add-ons. (They are often literally in parentheses.) It seems that, for her, the seductiveness of the information highway has superseded the politics of who has access to the cars.

Heather Menzies is not romantic about the information highway. Menzies is an Ottawa writer, teacher, activist and mother. She teaches at Carleton University.

image from Whose Brave New World?

Whose Brave New World is her fourth book on technology and restructuring. In it, she describes in Orwellian detail what is happening to people and their jobs as they turn into commodities to be erased at the push of a button. She then goes on in some detail to explain how the information revolution is facilitating this process. She asks if it makes sense that we keep trying to do things faster and faster. She questions the structure that has been created to feed transnational corporate gobbling.

Menzies illustrates her argument by describing case studies in the areas of the garment industry, railways, telecommunications, automobiles, and aerospace. She stresses the dangers of computer monitoring, telework, and job-related injuries in this so-called "brave new world." (There are physical injuries, such as repetitive strain injuries.) But equally dangerous are the situations where employees and customers both become objects—human interaction disappears as workers work out of their homes by themselves and customers shop by computer or phone.

The federal government enters the picture wearing the hat of IHAC, the Information Highway Advisory Council. Menzies points out that government involvement in this area is useful, as long as the involvement is driven by people and not corporate interests.

But IHAC's report was so dominated by big business that Jean-Claude Parrot, the one labour representative on the Council, wrote a dissenting report, which was published as an appendix to the document.

Menzies, however, does not countenance inaction or despair. She harkens back to Harold Innis, who suggested in 1984 that we need to recover a sense of time. She recommends that we need a social charter for the information highway where we control its agenda and make sure that it is open, inclusive and locally controlled, and that it is also dedicated to sharing knowledge and building national and international communication. She says that we have to be involved in policy making but reminds us that we have to stay grounded in what is happening to us in our own communities:

"Regional, national, and international networking is vital as a source of sharing analysis and gaining strategic support through common and collective action. Everything I've read and personally experienced through twenty-five years of "grassroots" activism in the women's movement and the peace movement convinces me this is true. We are the movement. We are the information highway and the new economy. We have to act as though these structures are a place where people really are the bottom line, where communications is first and foremost a matter of human relationships and community. By acting that way, we can make it so."

Whose Brave New World is the first book I have read in a long while that gives me hope. It is a clear and perceptive analysis that cuts through the glamour and glitter of the "brave new world" of communications to show clearly how we can take back our voice.

At the workshop I facilitated, the group of twenty-five or so women talked about our experiences online, and then our discussion broadened to encompass how we envisioned using the internet. Suddenly we were talking about the economy, about federal transfer payments and their effect on provincial social programs, about jobs, about volunteerism. Someone said, "I guess we're getting off topic." My response was that perhaps finally we were on topic.

We cannot ignore the information highway. But we have to be able to follow its path on the map and watch carefully how it continues to plough through our lives and then decide whether or not we want to take an alternative route.

Penny Goldsmith is the chair of the Equal Access Committee of the Vancouver CommunityNet (formerly the FreeNet). She is also the owner of Lazara Press, a local publishing house which has recently published a speech by Dr. Ursula Franklin entitled Every Tool Shapes the Task: Communities and the Information Highway.

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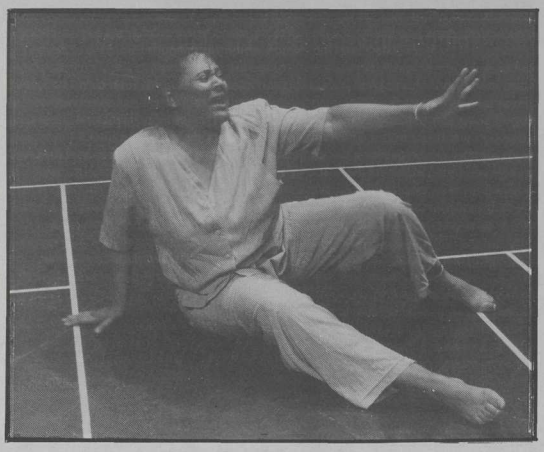
Interview with playwright Addena Sumter-Freitag:

Stay black and die



as told to April Sumter-Freitag

Addena Sumter-Freitag is an accomplished playwright. She is a seventh generation African-Canadian, whose roots are in Truro, Nova Scotia on her mother's side and Colombia, South Carolina on her father's side. She currently lives in Rae Edzo,Northwest Territories where she works as a program coordinator at an Aboriginal friendship centre.

Sumter-Freitag will be in Vancouver in September to perform her play, Stay Black and Die, *at the Fringe Festival. She has previously performed it at Fringe Festivals in Winnipeg, Adelaide, Australia, and last month in Halifax.* Stay Black and Die *is the story of a young Black Canadian girl growing up in the 1950s and 60s in Winnipeg's North End, describing the social and racial climate of that era in Canada.*

Addena Sumter-Freitag was last in Vancouver in May and was interviewed by her daughter April Sumter-Freitag on Obaa, a show produced by for and about women of colour on Vancouver's Co-op Radio. That interview appears below.

April Sumter-Frietag: In 1993, you won Theatre BC's National Playwrights Competition for the play you will be performing here at the Fringe, *Stay Black and Die*. When you won the contest, were you asked about the title?

Addena Sumter-Freitag: Yes, I was asked about the title, and some of the comments from the people who judged the play were that the title sounded so foreboding that I should think about changing it.

April: And your response was?

Addena: My response was initially, "Oh God, what does that mean?" But I would never change it. I was tempted to but I couldn't. I really couldn't because the whole play to me is *Stay Black and Die*. It's what it means actually.

April: Could you let us in on that? What does "stay Black and die" mean?

Addena: It's a saying that many Black people say to their kids to scare them out of their wits. It means that there are only two things [Black people] have to do. When we were kids we'd say, "Oh please can I do it, please can I have it?" My mother would look at us and cut her eyes and suck her teeth and say, "Girl, there's only two things in this world you have to do and that is stay Black and die."

April: Quite a powerful statement. I assume she was a very interesting woman.

Addena: My mother? Oh God yes. Very interesting. That's a nice way of putting it. Very interesting. Quite complex. [laughs] Very unique. Quite dynamic.

April: I have some actual previous knowledge of this work and know that it's semi- or completely autobiographical.

Addena: It's completely autobiographical. I made nothing up that I can think of. I left out lots but...

April: So it is non-fiction.

Addena: Oh yeah. It's life. It's me. It's about a young Black girl growing up in Manitoba.

April: How many characters does it involve?

Addena: Maybe 10, 15.

April: That many?

Addena: Yeah. I play a lot of characters so it's hard to say. The characters go in and out like they were described as beautifully drawn characters. They were actually quite fun, but it's really quick. It goes from one to another and back and forth. It's quite unique. I think it's great.

April: And how would you describe it...as a drama, comedy, biography?

Addena: All those things. It was described as a roller coaster ride of emotions by one reviewer and I thought "wow, that's what it is." It's really funny at times and sometimes it's really painful for some people to watch. It's a challenge to an audience I think.

April: You've performed *Stay Black and Die* in its entirety since 1993.

"Ever since slavery there's been horrible pictures and statues and little lawn jockeys which I talk about in the play and ugly Aunt Jemimas and gollywogs, ugly little pickaninny dolls, and things like that."

Addena: I performed it twice. Last summer, 1995, at the Winnipeg Fringe Festival and in 1996 at the Adelaide Festival in Australia.

April: Let's keep it in Canada for starters... The Winnipeg Fringe Festival is quite a large festival, I assume.

Addena: Yes it's quite big.

April: And how big was your space?

Addena: It was a small space, 120 [seats.] Really nice studio ; really comfortable, really intimate.

April: And what were your houses like?

Addena: Sold out every night.

April: How long did you run?

Addena: I think six performances. It was spread out over the length of the Fringe. Every night was sold out; we turned away 206 people.

April: That's amazing.

Addena: Yeah, it was a dream come true.

April: And it was well received?

Addena: Very well received. Some people found it really painful in parts to watch because it parallels so many people's lives and lots of times we put things behind us and pretend they didn't happen but when you see [the play] it gives you a little twinge and reminds you. Some people just are really empathetic and sympathetic for the young girl and it's painful for that reason, [even though] it might not parallel or reflect their lives in any way.

April: I have heard that it is so painful for some people that they have had to leave during the performance.

Addena: Yeah, a couple times that's true.

April: And some of them had to leave assisted.

Addena: Well, a couple of people fainted. A couple of people had to leave because, I guess, if you see something that's very painful, the best thing to do would be to leave. It didn't hurt my feelings or insult me; it made me feel that the pain of the young girl came through. It made me feel that I'm a good storyteller, I'm a good actress. I'm not trying to freak out the audience. I'm telling a story—this is her story, this is not something I made up to be dynamic or whatever; it's just truth, that's all.

April: And in Adelaide, Australia your audiences had similar responses?

Addena: Yeah, in fact in the lobby, I set up some memorabilia from that era for young Black people. I do a Black history display and I also have a book so that the audience can write down their comments, responses or whatever they want to say. When I read it, it is just absolutely unbelievable the way the play was embraced with such passion and love and respect.

April: You have a display that goes with your show?

Addena: Yes, I do. I know for the Chinese community, there was a lot of negative statues and pictures and stuff depicting what a Chinese person was supposed to look like and a lot of racial epitaphs and stuff written. And it's the same for the Black culture. Ever since slavery there's been horrible pictures and statues and little lawn jockeys which I talk about in the play and ugly Aunt Jemimas and gollywogs, ugly little pickaninny dolls, and things like that.

April: A gollywog?

Addena: It's a little Black English ugly nigger baby doll.

April: And you've collected some of these items?

Addena: I have a incredible collection at my house. Unfortunately I haven't been home in five years. But I have some with me; some I just sort of carry. So those are the things I have in the display, and I also have some nice stuff—some Black Canadian history. Stuff about what life was like for them from the beginning of Canada 'til now: the history of Black Canadian people, where different groups of them came from, like the States or the West Indies, or the ones who were born here seven, eight generations ago, like you and me.

April: ...and you have a very incredible document as well.

Addena: Yes. I have a slave auction notice. I have a copy of that document. That was in Canada by the way, in Halifax. It's not an American document.

April: We'd like to think there wasn't slavery in Canada. Unfortunately there is documentation that there was.

You're living in the Northwest Territories now. What has been your experience in the North?

Addena. Do you mean like freezing cold to death? *[laughs]* Isolated in the middle of nowhere? Those kind of things?

April: I was thinking more of arts and issues to do with women of colour.

Addena: Well, it's actually been a really good growth period for me. Really positive reinforcement, learning. I work with a lot of women—older women, young girls—and I do self esteem workshops, assertiveness workshops and healing circles. Working in those areas, I've been doing a lot of my own healing and growing, and it's resulted in my starting to write and starting to come out and say "it's time to get off your butt and do your stuff."

Stay Black and Die *will be performed at the Edison Electric Moving Gallery, 916 Commercial Dr, Sept 5-10 and Sept 14-15. For exact times and ticket information, call the Fringe Festival office at 873-3646 or pick up a Festival program. Tickets are available at the Community Box Office, 280-2801.*

Feminist artists and activists:

Add guerrillas and stir

by Leanne Johnson

An uneasy quiet seems to have settled around the Canadian art scene these days. Continual cutbacks at all levels of funding have everyone reeling. As the death knells toll for various organizations, the survivors wander about in shock waiting for the next cut. As you are reading this, the federal government is deciding on the future of tobacco sponsorship. *[US president Bill Clinton recently signed a bill to ban tobacco sponsorship of arts, culture and sporting events in the US.]* It's bad enough that arts organizations have been relegated to the ethically murky waters of tobacco sponsorship and casinos, but the threatened removal of the tobacco sponsorship has left Canadian arts organizations looking more like the shocked survivors of the threatened Vancouver earthquake than lofty cultural guardians.

Everyone is silent these days. The impending sense of doom seems to have crushed dissension amongst the ranks. The arts community has taken an "all for one, one for all" approach to funding. Nobody wants to rock the boat lest they lose their own funding. I don't know about you, but I miss the lively debates of old. Back then, there wasn't enough money either, but it wasn't the focus of all arts activism (if you can call this pervading gloominess activism).

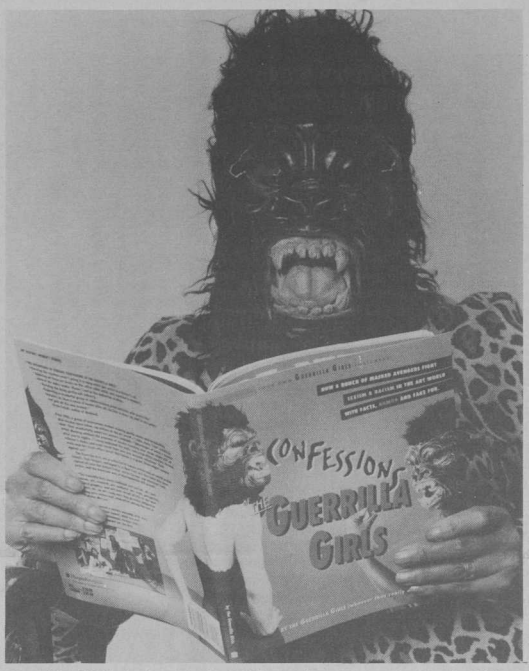
So, thank goodness the Guerrilla Girls are coming to the Vogue Theatre to shake things up in these sad parts. The New York-based Guerrilla Girls–self-proclaimed conscience of the art world–are an anonymous group of "art world feminists." They made their first appearance in the New York art scene in 1985. Decked "out in gorilla masks that hid their identities, the Girls went to town ,shaking"up the art world with catchy slogans like, "Do women have to get naked to get into the Metropolitan Museum? Less than 5 percent of the artists in the Modern Art section are women, but 85 percent of the nudes are female."

Armed with humour, wit and posters, the Guerrilla Girls raised the profile of gender and racial inequity in the all too often untouchable art world. Bringing down elitist arguments about aesthetics and free markets, they have been tireless lobbyists against the entrenched hypocrisy of the visual art scene. Curators, critics and artists found themselves mouthing arguments that sounded vaguely like, "I don't know much about equality but I know what the public likes." Through careful research and alternative media, the Guerrilla Girls have outed organizations and individuals that have excluded or under-represented women artists and artists of colour.

Armed with humour, wit and posters, the Guerrilla Girls raised the profile of gender and racial inequity in the all too often untouchable art world.

Legend has it (or you can read it in the tell all book, *Confessions of the Guerrilla Girls)* the Guerrilla Girls have never personally profited from their work. They have managed to remain anonymous, choosing to name themselves after under-appreciated deceased women artists. Over the past ten years, the Guerrilla Girls have helped improve the conditions for women artists and artists of colour, but they admit there is still a long way to go.

Which brings me back to why I'm excited about the Guerrilla Girls' first appearance in Vancouver. Equity in the arts in Canada is an issue that needs to be revisited and monitored–even in these times of cutbacks. Canadian arts advocacy is beginning to resemble arts abdication. We need things stirred-up. Everyone should be clamouring for equal representation. It will be inspiring to see a fun and lively debate instead of the usual liturgy on organizations and funding.



Guerrilla Girl finds time for a little light reading. ***Photo courtesy the Girls.***

We could all take a lesson from the Guerrilla Girls in grassroots advocacy. We've quietly protested, remained polite as all the avenues to funding have steadily been shut down. I don't know about you, but I'm going to be at the Vogue Theatre to see two of the founding members of the Guerrilla Girls speak out on equal representation and give us an update on the state of the arts. And in particular, I want to stick around and hear what the locals have to say during the discussion period that follows.

The Guerrilla Girls will be speaking at the Vogue Theatre in Vancouver on September 22 at 3 pm and at 7pm. Tickets are available through Ticketmaster (604) 280-4444.

Leanne Johnson is a Vancouver-based writer who is tired of being depressed.

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Women at the Vancouver Fringe Festival:

Playing on the fringes

compiled by Shannon e. Ash

Celebrating its 12th year the Vancouver's Fringe Theatre Festival is part of a phenomenon that began in Edinburgh, Scotland and has spread to many locations, including Edmonton, Victoria, and Vancouver. Fringe Festivals feature performers and works on the "fringe" of the mainstream theatre world. This year, the Vancouver Fringe Festival is happening from September 5th to 15th at venues on and around Commercial Drive in East Vancouver. Grandview Park at Commercial and Charles will be a central gathering place during the Festival and will feature a number of free performances. Productions from Europe and across North America are coming, but there is also a wide variety of local talent on display; the majority of productions are from the Vancouver area. Women—as actors, writers and directors—have found the Fringe a place to do the work they want to, addressing issues and taking political views not often found in mainstream theatre productions. Below, *Kinesis* brings readers previews of some productions created by women. As well in this issue, *Kinesis* presents an interview with Addena Sumter-Freitag who will be performing her award-winning play, *Stay Black and Die*, at the Fringe *[see page 17.]*

For specific times and locations of performances and ticket information pick up a Festival program available at various cafes and retail outlets around town, or call the Festival office at (604) 873-3646.

Crossing Boundaries

CROSSING BOUNDARIES

"The only play that brings you face to face with issues of control, power, and abuse between women." Written by Penny Gummerson and directed by Sandra Ferens—both local artists—*Crossing Boundaries* explores the issue of lesbian battering through the relationship of two women friends who become lovers. Presented by Lone Pine Productions.

MOMENTS OF TRANSFORMATION: Jewish Women's Stories

Writer, performer, and storyteller Helen Mintz presents a one-woman show about Jewish women's lives, past and present: stories of the Holocaust, nineteenth-century Eastern Europe, and Jewish lesbians. Mintz has previously performed at the Women in View Festival in Vancouver to great acclaim. *[Her performance* Jewish Voices of Resistance *was reviewed in* Kinesis, *April 1994.]* Directed by Susan Astley.

DIRTY LAUNDRY

In a new comedy by Judi Price, three women attempt to dispel the folklore that states, "Women must bear the burden of doing laundry...forever." Mona Lisa, Botteccelli's Venus, and Lady Godiva make guest appearances. *Dirty Laundry* is presented by Penniless Theatre, which has done other Fringe shows such as *Bert and Ernie are Gay*, and whose mission is to "create humourous works with a social conscience."

THE TURKEY BASTING METHOD

A single woman, over 35, with no male parter but wanting a child, endeavours to get a male neighbour and female friends to help her become a mom. Writer Teresa O'Leary, a CBC Radio reporter originally from Newfoundland, "takes a swipe at religion, motherhood, and even traditional concepts of love and romance." A comic look at a serious theme.

ORIGIN OF THE SPECIES

Archaeologist Molly finds a four million year old cave woman and brings her back to live with her. As cave woman Victoria "evolves," Molly begins to question the role that Woman has played in human history. Written by Bryony Lavery, with East Vancouver resident and lesbian actor Taylor Stutchbury playing the role of Victoria.

WUMPA

Vancouver's full figure theatre, a feminist theatre company, presents a "fast-paced romp" through a metaphorical circus, centred on the misadventures of one woman who is unwillingly thrust into the circus ring. In a play written and performed by Tammy Bentz, Jacqueline Dandeneau, and Sharon Heath, the three women use acrobatics, dance, music and myth to explore women's roles and self-discovery. The production has toured internationally and was voted Best of the Fringe in Melbourne, Australia.

THE TROUT SISTERS

Foursight Theatre returns again with a "darkly comic mystery" about the Trout Hotel on the Devonshire coast in southern England. Featuring performances by Naomi Cooke and Lori Weidenhammer. Directed by Kate Hale, who directed last year's Fringe performances, *Boadicea* and *Slap*.

WOMEN WHO RUN WITH SWINE: Myths and Stories of a Lesbian Gal

Musician/comic Monica Grant, based in San Francisco, presents this one-woman comedic look at life and relationships, featuring such numbers as "The Co-dependency Polka."

MRS. CAGE

"Supermarket shopping can be murder. Just ask Mrs. Cage. "An after-the-fact murder story, where the woman who killed—the middle class, middle-aged Mrs. Cage—is interrogated by a police detective, and the psychological abuse she suffered from her husband and daughter is revealed. Written by Nancy Barr and directed by Candace O'Connor. Produced by Stage Troupers/Equity Co-op.

MOVING SIDEWALKS, BOARDS AND NAILS

A "true story of one woman's journey," told through prose, poetry and song. A one-woman show by Vancouver writer, singer and songwriter Janet Walker, *Moving Sidewalks* was first seen at Theatre in the Raw at La Quena Coffeehouse in Vancouver, where it garnered this comment, among others: "I'm a chain smoker and once you started I didn't even think of a cigarette."

LADY AND THE HOOVER

San Franscisco actress KayLynn Raschke, tired of being treated like "another blonde piece of furniture," found an outlet in the Fringe for her ideas. She wrote and performs in this one-woman show about family secrets, suburban housewifery, and the erotic possibilities of electrical appliances.

WANTON DISREGARD

Playwright Susan Helenchilde and Style of Cause return to the Fringe with a production about society's expectations of maternal behaviour, asking the questions, "when is deviation from that behaviour criminal, and who decides?"

THE GERANIUM WARD

"Beatrice MacNeil's acclaimed piece from the Cape Breton Festival of Plays" is set in a mental institution where four "disparate personalities" cross paths. Sexual repression, religious dogma and pyschiatric labelling are all attacked. Produced by the Vancouver Makeshift Theatre.

DUSA, FISH, STAS AND VI

A chronicle of four women struggling to live in "a society that undermines and discriminates," this play centres on Fish, a young woman seeking equality within the patriarchal structure. Written by Sherry O'Brien and produced by the P.O.W. Company in Vancouver.

ONLY NINE

Written by Tina Overbury, *Only Nine* is the story of a woman who yearns for intimacy while struggling with the effects of an abusive childhood. The play is written completely in poetry, incorporating movement and text. Presented by Persimmons Theatre Company.

Shannon e. Ash is a regular writer who is used to being on the fringe.

Lady and the Hoover

LETTERS

dear readers

***Kinesis* loves receiving mail. Please get your letter to us by the 18th of the month.**

If you can, keep the length to about 500 words. (If you go way over, we might edit for space.)

Hope to hear from you very soon.
Love,
Kinesis

Respecting women with breast cancer

Kinesis:

Just received my third issue of *Kinesis*, a gift from my daughter in Vancouver. It is most informative, interesting and exciting to be informed from a womyn's point of view from the West to East. Especially enjoyed information on "The Women's March Against Poverty." Recognized one of the womyn, who was also in our rural town of 1500, that also had a "March" with a gathering of 56 diverse people. We were ecstatic!

Congratulations and thank you to the Vancouver Women's Health Collective and the Georgia Strait Alliance on the excellent work they are doing of informing and educating the public. Too many womyn are dying passively of breast cancer and we need to unite and stand up and shout. It must stop, more research needs to be done, to prevent. Keep up the good work.

Now for the other side...Most disturbed and outraged to again see the womyn with the clock on her breast, re: Time *[which accompanied the article on breast cancer and xenoestrogens in the July/August 1996 issue.]* Point taken, but have you considered women who have had their breast amputated? Perhaps one does not realize the impact of this photo to some of us, that feel like "Picasso's Women," the title of book written by Rosalinda MacPhee of Vancouver.

As womyn we need to honor Roslinda MacPhee for helping many womyn by telling her story of breast cancer. *[Ed note: MacPhee passed away earlier this year.]* Rachel Carson is another womyn to honor, who was aware over 30 years ago of the environmental toxins.

Thank you for your time and keep up the good work.

Sincerely,

Donna M. Gall-Chapeskie
Barry's Bay, Ontario

White Ribbon Campaign takes money from women

Kinesis:

I know very little about the White Ribbon Campaign: does anyone out there know what they actually do with the money they raise? Apart from buying mailing lists and hiring fund-raisers? *[The campaign involves men in Canada wearing white ribbons as their symbolic contribution to ending male violence against women.]*

The letter they sent me included a questionnaire. I thought (I am quite gullible) they might actually be conducting a survey. Then I thought, maybe the questions will educate people about violence against women. But the questions were inane, leading only to the "conclusion" that if I truly care about violence against women, I will send money to the campaign (whose activities I know nothing about).

They urged me to respond within 10 days. I did, and asked them to respond within 10 days. *[Her letter is printed below.]* A month later, nothing.

The White Ribbon Campaign's letter is in fact a model of behaviours that I would like to see men change: it arrives uninvited and unwelcome; it misrepresents its intentions; it makes inappropriate demands.

But if I am a nice person I will do what he wants anyway, right?

Norah Fraser
London, Ontario

Richard Berry, National Coordinator
White Ribbon Campaign
PO Box 20224, Stn Brm B
Toronto ON M7Y 3R1

Dear Mr. Berry,

I received your form letter asking me, an impoverished woman who has experienced male violence, to give money to men who promise to 'work together' to stop violence against women.

I hope that all money raised by the 'white ribbon campaign' will be turned over to women who are already actively helping women escape male violence.

While I support the concepts of men working to unlearn violent behaviours and of men helping other men with that process, I am very angry that an organisation is fund-raising in the way that the white ribbon campaign is fund-raising, *targetting* (I use the word consciously) the very people who might otherwise give money to women working against violence against women.

Please take me off your mailing list.

Please tell me how you got my name and address so I can contact your source, and stop the further release of my name and address. I enclose the mailing label so you can trace it.

Please respond within 10 days, informing me of how the white ribbon campaign funds will be used to change men's behaviour and stop violence against women.

Thank you,
Norah Fraser

P.S. Don't ask women for money. Give money to women, instead.

P.P.S. I have, with the limited resources available to me, attempted to mimic your fund-raising letter's style in the hope that you will better understand my message.

P.P.P.S. Post-scripts to word-processed letters are tacky, don't you think?

GUARDIAN, from page 10

have the override clause removed. They got nowhere. (Interestingly, when asked whether there had been any support for this from the BC Coalition of People with Disabilities, members of whom also sit on the implementation coalition, he replied, simply, "None.")

One audience member asked if the override clause could be challenged under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which protects people from discrimination on the grounds of disability. Shackleton said that this is possible and that he's been thinking of taking this matter to the BC Human Rights Coalition *[an advocacy group.]*

Spitting out the Big Pill

Towards the end of the forum, activist L.E. Roze took the mike. Roze founded the Puzzle Factory Theatre Company in Ontario. Puzzle Factory has helped psychiatric survivors get together to talk, socialize, write and think about how their experiences in the mental health system have affected their lives, and express themselves creatively. The powerful, funny, political plays its members have produced have been vital to the Ontario psychiatric survivors' movement, which is part of the international mad movement: groups of people all over the world promoting alternatives to psychiatry and fighting against forced treatment, electroshock and other human rights abuses perpetrated in the name of "mental health." The movement has suffered horribly from infighting between people with political differences and personality conflicts, and many activists have pulled back from the movement as a result (Roze and myself among them.) However, we have had time to renew our energies, and are back.

This is what Roze had to say at the forum:

"I wanted to say nothing but my blood is boiling and I have to speak. I don't want this day to be in vain. I see a lot of compassionate, hardworking people here. I see that we have to fight for legally recognized representation agreements.

"But we also need to take power. We need to take responsibility for our own lives and our own health, including our mental health. I have had many labels. I spent four years pacing the wards. I lost my kids to the system.

"In the 1980s, I started Puzzle Factory. I also helped put on the first national psychiatric survivors' conference in Montreal in 1989. In the early '90s, I had to leave the psychiatric survivors' movement, and leave Toronto, to get some clarity. Working inside the movement with people who have the same experiences and the same anger as I do became too much. I needed space, and moved to the west coast to do some thinking and some healing. I've been in hospital a couple of times since then.

"I think the first video we saw today made the most important point: what we need when we're in trouble is someone who really cares about us.

"So many of us have fallen into what I call Swallowing the Big Pill: 'I'm a schizophrenic' or 'I'm a manic depressive.' Well, I say: No! I'm me! I'm a whole human being. I was told I was manic depressive. I was told I was schizophrenic. These are just opinions. In fact, they're the opinions of psychiatrists, who have spent 10 or 12 years in university, getting their ideas out of textbooks.

"I took a lot of pills. But I finally got clear and took responsibility for myself.

"I've had emotional and spiritual crises that this society has chosen to see as mental illness. I don't believe anyone is mentally ill. I don't believe in mental illness.

"I'd like to be part of the movement again. It's been hard to sit back getting healthy. My heart is with my people. But I'm not manic depressive, thank you very much. And I will never collect welfare again—14 years was plenty.

"I'd like to do something, but I have a hard time being in an environment where I feel like my feelings and opinions are not listened to.

"I realize it's really hard to take responsibility, to take control of your own life. And I'm not saying that medications are bad. Nothing is black and white. But I'd like this to end with something being set up. I'd like to move on to do something with the people in this room."

If you are interested in helping lobby against the override clause, please contact Lenny Gagnon at (604) 941-8652.

Irit Shimrat escaped from her third and last psychiatric lock-up in 1980 and has not seen a shrink or taken medications since then. From 1986 to 1990, she edited the magazine Phoenix Rising: The Voice of the Psychiatrized. Between 1990 and 1992, she coordinated the Ontario Psychiatric Survivors' Alliance, and also presented two CBC Ideas radio programs: "Analyzing Psychiatry" and "By Reason of Insanity." She is currently working on a book about the psychiatric survivors' movement in Canada, to be published by Press Gang Publishers in 1997, and has recently founded an information network called the Lunatics Liberation Front.

Thanks to Lenny Gagnon, as well as Persimmon Blackbridge and Carla McKague, for their help with this article.

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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, or fax: (604) 255-5511. For more information call (604) 255-5499.

INVOLVEMENT

WANNA GET INVOLVED?

With *Kinesis*? We want to get involved with you too. Help plan our next issue. All women interested in what goes into *Kinesis*—whether it's news, features or arts—are invited to our next Story Meetings: **Tues Sep 3** and **Tues Oct 1** at 7 pm at our office, 301-1720 Grant St, Van. If you can't make the meeting, but still want to find out about writing for *Kinesis*, give Agnes a call at (604) 255-5499. No experience is necessary. Childcare subsidies available.

CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS

Are you interested in finding out how *Kinesis* is put together? Well...just drop by during our next production dates and help us design and lay out Canada's national feminist newspaper. Production for the **October 1996** issue is from **Sep 15-24**. No experience is necessary. Training and support will be provided. If this notice intrigues you, call us at 255-5499. Childcare subsidies available.

ABORIGINAL WOMEN'S NETWORK

The Aboriginal Women's Action Network (AWAN) holds regular monthly meetings at VSW, 301-1720 Grant St. We work towards equality and justice for Aboriginal women. Workshops and projects will be developed for Aboriginal women in the Eastside. All Aboriginal women are invited to participate. If you have any questions, please call (604) 255-5511.

INVOLVEMENT

VSW PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE

All women are invited to join Vancouver Status of Women's programming committee and become involved in planning community activities, such as the Women's Film Series and Single Moms Day in the Park. It's fun. It's important. It's cool. Interested? Call 255-5511.

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, organize the library, help connect women with the community resources they need, and get involved in other exciting jobs! The next volunteer orientation will be on **Wed, Sep 18**, 7pm at VSW, 301-1720 Grant St. For more info, call 255-5511. Childcare subsidies available.

EVENTS

VSW 25 YEAR BASH

VSW is 25 and Alive! Help celebrate the Vancouver Status of Women's birthday at a gala party and book launch on **Sat Nov 2** *[see display ad below for details.]* Featuring Judy Rebick and Kike Roach launching their new book, *Politically Speaking*, plus fab performers and speakers from VSW's past and present. Everyone welcome! For more info call 255-5511.

ANNUAL *KINESIS* BENEFIT

The annual *Kinesis* Benefit will be held on **Thurs Sep 19** starting at 7pm at the WISE Club, 1882 Adanac St, Vancouver. The event will feature performances by Sandy Scofield, Penny Singh and the Onna Zoku Bang Band (where Taiko meets the wild west), the draw of the annual raffle (for lots of fabulous prize packages), and loads of fun. The event is for women and children. Childcare is available on site. The venue is wheelchair accessible. For more info, to volunteer, or to buy raffle tickets, call 255-5499.

SOCIAL JUSTICE SOCIALS

The Unitarian Church of Vancouver's Social Justice Committee is presenting a series of Social Justice Socials **every second Fri** from **Sep 20 to Dec 6,** 7-9pm, at The Unitarian Church at 949 W.49th Ave (at Oak). The theme is "Share the Wealth" and will include speakers, videos, small discussion groups, chances to make posters or create skits, snacks and music. The first speaker in the series on **Sep 20** will be Jean Swanson of End Legislated Poverty. Cost is $2 per evening or $10 for a season pass. For more info or to register call Lydia at 734-3769 or Margaret at 738-4217.

VANCOUVER • STATUS • OF • WOMEN

Vancouver Status of Women is . . .

25 and Alive!
A Gala Birthday Party and Book Launch

Saturday, November 2

Featuring Sawagi Taiko and others,
VSWers from yesterday and today
and
Judy Rebick and Kike Roach
launching their new book
Politically Speaking
(Douglas & McIntyre)

Refreshments! Cash bar! Door prizes!

Schmoozing from 6:30 pm
Main event at 8 pm sharp

Vancouver Public Library
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THE FRINGE
VANCOUVER'S THEATRE FESTIVAL

BULLETIN BOARD

EVENTS

WHAT'S THE RISK?

AIDS Vancouver, in conjunction with YouthCo, the Positive Women's Network and Healing Our Spirit, is organizing an information evening about HIV and STDs for women who have sex with women on **Thurs Oct 3**, 8-10pm at Harry's Off Commercial, 1716 Charles St. Four speakers will present information for women on what puts women at risk, living with HIV, and what we can do for ourselves to keep us and our community healthy, whether we are HIV+, HIV-, or don't know our status. Limited childcare subsidies are available. ASL Interpretation is available for the evening and the venue is wheelchair accessible. For more info or to request childcare subsidies call Maria Stanborough at AIDS Vancouver, 681-2122, ext. 226.

TAKE BACK THE NIGHT

This year's Take Back the Night march and rally in Vancouver will be held Fri Sep 20 starting at 7pm at Trout Lake (Victoria Dr. and E. 15th Ave.) The event is organized by Vancouver Rape Relief and Women's Shelter in association with the Canadian Association of Sexual Assault Centres. The march and rally is a women-only event. Sign language interpreters and mobility attendants will be available. For more info call (604) 872-8212.

TAKE BACK THE NIGHT - VICTORIA

The annual *Take Back The Night Rally and March* in Victoria, BC is set for **Fri Sep 20**. Women and children are gathering at Centennial Square at 7 pm and marching to the Legislative Lawns for the Rally. The evening also includes a celebration at the YM/YWCA. The theme of this year's Take Back The Night is "Making Links" between various types of oppression and the resulting violence against women and children. For more info contact the Victoria Status of Women Action Group at (604) 383-7322.

WOMEN'S FILM FESTIVAL

The 7th annual St. John's International Women's Film and Video Festival is taking place **Oct 19-20**, screening films and videos directed, written or produced by women. This year's festival will feature films from Atlantic Rim countries bordering the north Atlantic. For more info contact PO Box 984, St. John's, Nfld, A1C 6C2.

BETH GOOBIE

Beth Goobie, author of *Scars of Light* and *Could I Have My Body Back Now?*, and winner of the 1995 Pat Lowther Award, will be reading on **Wed Sep 11** at 7:30pm at Women in Print, 3566 W.4th Ave, Vancouver. Admission is free. For more info call 732-4128.

EVENTS

VIVIAN MARPLE

Calgary writer Vivian Marple will be reading from her acclaimed book of poetry, *I Mention the Garden for Clarity,* at Women in Print, 3566 W.4th Ave, on **Tues Sep 10,** at 7:30pm. Free admission. For more info call 732-4128.

MEG HICKLING

Come and chat with Meg Hickling as she launches her first book, *Speaking of Sex,* on **Thurs Sep 5,** anytime between 1-8pm at Women in Print, 3566 W. 4th Ave, Vancouver. This is an informative primer for educating kids about sex. Free admission. For more info call 732-4128.

DYKEWORDS

Dykewords:readings by local dyke writers is held every second Thurs at 9pm at The Lotus, 455 Abbott St, Vancouver. **Thurs Sep 26** features Jackie Crossland, Nora Randall, Faith Jones & Juliet O'Keefe. Admission is $1-4 sliding scale. Everyone welcome. For more info call 685-7777.

WOMEN'S HISTORY NETWORK

The second annual B.C Women's History Network conference, entitled *Cultural Contacts*, will be held at at Malaspina University-College in Nanaimo **Sep 27-28.** Subjects for discussion include the history of Aboriginal women elders and the presence of women on the internet. For more info contact Helen in Nanaimo at (604) 753-3245 (local 2129).

WOMEN & THE LAW

West Coast LEAF is presenting a Women & The Law series entitled *Talking 'Bout A (R)Evolution Of The Law* **Wednesdays, Sep 4, 11, 18 and 25** from 7:30-9pm at Bollum's Books , 710 Granville St. Topics are, respectively each week: "Making Canada A More Equal Place For Women;" "Sexual Assault Law Reform;" "Bringing Equality Home;" and "Equality In The Workplace." For info and reservations call West Coast LEAF at (604) 684-8772.

THE GUERRILLA GIRLS

The Contemporary Art Gallery and Opus Framing & Art Supplies are hosting a benefit featuring The Guerrilla Girls:The Conscience of the Art World. Visual artists with a humourous and feminist perspective, The Guerrilla Girls will present their illustrated lecture on **Sun Sep 22** at 3pm and 7pm at Vancouver's Vogue Theatre. Tickets are available from Ticketmaster: $15 regular, $10 students. For more info contact Chris Tyrell at (604) 736-7535, local 2315.

AMAZING GREYS GATHERING

The 4th annual *Amazing Greys Gathering* is happening in Parksville at the Island Hall **Oct 25-27**. The event is a celebration of the energy, creativity and wisdom of mature women willing to explore the opportunities of age with joy, curiousity and openess. For more info contact Shelagh Wilson at (604) 954-2395.

GROUPS

RADICAL WOMEN

Radical Women is holding an evening study group called *Recipe for Winning Women's Rights: Revolutionary Politics!* every **Wed** from 7-8:30pm at Rebel Centre, 2278 E. 24th Ave., Vancouver. Topics for open debate and freewheeling discussion include the interconnections of race, sex, sexuality and class, and the revolutionary possibilities of women's leadership in action. Wheelchair accessible. For more info, call (604) 874-2943, 874-9048; or fax 874-9058.

SUBURBAN DYKES IN POCO

The Port Coquitlam Area Women's Centre will be hosting an Open House to explore the creation of a lesbian friendly space. This evening will be held on **Mon Sep 9** at 7:30pm. For more info, contact the Centre at (604) 941-6311.

EVERYWOMEN'S HEALTH CENTRE

Everywomen's Health Centre is seeking pro-choice women for Board positions. Everywoman's is a free-standing abortion clinic in Vancouver. For more info, leave a message for Kim Zander at (604) 322-6692.

RAPE RELIEF VOLUNTEERS

Vancouver Rape Relief and Women's Shelter needs women who are interested in volunteering for their 24- hour crisis line and transition house for women and children. Training sessions are on **Tues evenings**. For more info and a training interview, call (604) 872-8212.

PREGNANCY SUPPORT

The Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre Society has a Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) support worker available with information and counselling on drug and alcohol use during pregnancy. The Centre is located at 1607 East Hastings St., Vancouver. For an appointment or more info, call Jenelle McMillan (604) 251-4844.

LEGAL CLINIC FOR WOMEN

Battered Women's Support Services (BWSS) and UBC Law Students Legal Advice Program are co-sponsoring free legal clinics for women, to be held **every other Tues**, 6:30 to 8:30pm from **Sep 17 to Nov 12.** For info or to make an appointment, call BWSS at (604) 687-1867.

LEAF IS MOVING

The West Coast Women's Legal Education and Action Fund is moving. As of **Sep 1**, their new address will be #1517-409 Granville St, Vancouver, BC, V6C 1T2. Their phone and fax numbers will remain the same. Tel: 684-8772; Fax: 684-1543.

HOST PROGRAM VOLUNTEERS

The North Shore Multicultural Society's Host Program needs volunteers to spend 3 hours a week for about 6 months, assisting newcomers in adjusting to Canadian life and practising their English skills. A 2-hour volunteer training and orientation is provided, and you can start at any time. For more info contact Theresa Chong at (604) 988-2931.

GROUPS

GRASSROOTS WOMEN'S GROUP

The Philippine Women Centre in Vancouver initiated the Grassroots Women's Discussion Group to allow women opportunities to share common issues on a monthly basis. It is open to all women. The discussions led to the objective of making connections between the specific issues of women and the global context. The group is currently launching the No! to APEC (Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation) Campaign which was launched in August at the Under the Volcano Festival. A series of activities will follow, leading to a rally for the International Day of Protest Against Imperialist Globalization on Nov 25. For more info on the discussion group or the campaign, call Mable at (604) 322-9852.

BIG SISTERS

Big Sisters of BC Lower Mainland and the Positive Women's Network are looking for women to become Big Sisters for children of HIV+ mothers. You must be 20 years of age or older, and willing to commit for a minimum one year match with a Little Sister or Brother, and be able to spend 3-5 hours each week with them. For more info, contact Bronwyn at 681-2122 ext 200 or Tai Holley at 873-4525.

WAVAW VOLUNTEERS

Women Against Violence Against Women (WAVAW) rape crisis centre in Vancouver needs women to do rape crisis work. WAVAW offers extensive training in counselling & crisis intervention, advocacy & liaison work, and providing information on medical, police and legal procedures for rape crisis work. WAVAW is striving to be anti-racist, Jewish women supportive, anti-classist, anti-homophobic and anti-ableist, and wants the women in its collective to reflect the diversity of women in our community. The next training begins on **Sept 14** for 12 weeks, on Wed 7-10pm and Sun 11am-5pm. Childcare and transportation subsidies available. Sign language interpreters will be provided if needed. For more info, call 255-6228 or TTY 254-6268.

WOMEN AND AIDS

A new women's support group in Vancouver for women living with AIDS will be held **every other Sat** until Oct 26 at the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre, 44 E. Cordova St. The group will be facilitated by Wanda from Healing Our Spirit and Nancy from the Positive Women's Network. The group is confidential and attempts will be made to ensure the group is safe and accessible. Refreshments and snacks will be available. For more info call Nancy at 681-2122 ext 200.

BWSS FACILITATOR TRAINING

Battered Women's Support Services will be offering volunteer *Group Facilitator, Peer Counselor/Advocate* training in the **fall of 1996**. If you are interested in working with battered women as a volunteer at BWSS and would like to be considered for the training program, please call (604) 687-1868 for an application form.

A Unique Publication

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Subscribe to *Welfare Mothers Voice*, a 24 page national quarterly (English/Spanish) *written by mothers in poverty*. Published by the Welfare Warriors, moms fighting for the lives of mothers and children struggling to survive in a system not working for them

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BULLETIN BOARD

SUBMISSIONS

BRONWEN WALLACE AWARD

The Writers' Development Trust is calling for submissions of short fiction prose (under 2,500 words) for the Bronwen Wallace Award. Respecting the wishes of Bronwen Wallace, writers must be under 35. As well, they should be unpublished in book form, but have had their work appear in at least one independently edited magazine or anthology. Prize is $1,000. Send submissions by mail to: The Bronwen Wallace Award, c/o The Writers' Development Trust, 24 Ryerson Ave, Suite 201, Toronto, ON, M5T 2P3. Deadline is **Jan 15**

CHILDREN OF EXILE

Carol Camper, creator and editor of *Miscegenation Blues: Voices of Mixed Race Women*, is seeking submissions for an anthology of women and men of colour who were raised in white families or institutions, tentatively titles *Children of Exile*. Essays, articles, letters, journals, artwork, photography, interviews, *et cetera* are welcomed. Send submissions to Carol Camper c/o Sister Vision Press, PO Box 217, Stn E, Toronto, ON, M6H 4E2. Deadline is **Sep 30**.

THIN LINES OF COMMUNICATION

Women who have had anorexia and/or bulimia are invited to submit poetry, short fiction, personal non-fiction, and black and white visual art to the anthology *Thin Lines of Communication*, forthcoming from gynergy books. Send up to 20 pages, a brief biography, and a SASE to: *Thin Lines*, PO Box 1164, Saskatoon, SK S7K 3N2. Deadline is **Nov 1.**

AFRICAN CANADIAN WRITING

North: Contemporary African Canadian Writing is seeking unpublished manuscripts of poetry, short fiction, and non-fiction relating to contemporary Black writing practices and their contexts. Peter Hudson and Clifton Joseph are guest editors of this special issue of *West Coast Line*. Send manuscripts in duplicate plus a bio to *West Coast Line*, Attn: *North*, 2027 E. Academic Annex, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, BC, V5A 1S6. For more info call (604) 291-4287. Deadline is **Sep 15.**

JOURNAL OF LESBIAN STUDIES

The *Journal of Lesbian Studies* is calling for theoretical and research articles, poetry, fiction, debates, and personal experiences for a special issue on the experiences of lesbians of colour of mixed racial heritage to be published in Spring 1997. Authors are asked to submit a one-page outline of your submission plus a 2-3 sentence bio to: JLS Special Issue, LWC, 4 Wild Court, London WC2B 4AU, United Kingdom. Selected authors will be contacted and asked to write/submit a full-length article or story. Deadline is **Oct 1**.

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SUBMISSIONS

BREAST CANCER CONFERENCE

The first World Conference on Breast Cancer will be held in Kingston, Ontario **Jul 13-17, 1997.** Delegates from around the world will be discussing a wide range of topics. For those interested in attending or presenting, or for more info phone the conference office at (613) 549-1118.

BEIJING PHOTOS

The Vancouver Assoc of Chinese Canadians and the Burnaby Art Gallery are collaborating on a photography exhibit of the 1995 4th World Conference on Women in Beijing. Send a maximum of 10 b/w or colour prints. Include a one page statement about your experiences at the conference along with contact information, and a SASE if you want your prints returned. Contact Grace Thomson, Burnaby Art Gallery, 6344 Deer Lake Ave, Burnaby, BC, V5G 2J3, or call (604) 291-9441. Deadline is **Sept 30**.

BRIDGING NORTH AND SOUTH

Canadian Woman Studies is seeking submissions for an exploration of feminist practice and theory through the lens of women's growing global connections and organization. Send essays, research reports, manifestos, true stories, brief anecdotes, poetry, cartoons, drawings and other artwork to: Canadian Woman Studies, 212 Founders, York University, 4700 Keele St. North York, ON M3J 1P3. Call (416) 736-5356. Fax (416) 736-5765. E-mail cwscf@yorku.ca Deadline is **Oct 30**.

CLASSIFIEDS

PUBLISHING OPPORTUNITY

Caffyn Kelley is moving and is wanting to pass on Gallerie Feminist Publishing Company, including assets of books and cards by women artists—and no debts! Free to enthusiastic applicant. Located in North Vancouver. If you're interested, call (604) 929-7129.

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COUNSELLING SERVICES FOR WOMEN

Offering group, individual and couple counselling with a feminist philosophy, Hakomi techniques, art and gestalt therapy. Sliding fee scale. Please contact Miljenka Zadravec, M.Ed, Sydney Foran, MSW, Fran Friesen, M.Ed, or Elli Tamasin, M.Ed at 304-1720 Grant St, Van, or call 253-0143.

WOMEN'S SELF-DEFENSE

Women Educating in Self-defense Training (WEST) teaches Wenlido. In Basic classes, you learn how to make the most of mental, physical and verbal skills to get away from assault situations. Continuing training builds on basic techniques to improve physical and mental strength. By women, for women. For info, call 876-6390.

CITYVIEW CO-OP

Cityview Co-op has one, two and three bedroom suites for $565, $696, $795 per month and refundable share purchase. Carpets, blinds, appliances, parking and laundry room. Children and small pets welcome. Please send a business size SASE to Membership Committee, Cityview Housing Co-op, 108-1885 E. Pender St, Vancouver, BC, V5L 1W6.

KALEIDOSCOPE: WOMEN IN MUSIC

A weekend of women and music is happening September 28 and 29 as *Kaleidoscope: a Festival of Women in Music* hits the stages at three venues in Vancouver. Organized by the Women in Music Society, the Festival is the first of its kind in Western Canada and will provide a unique forum for women involved in every aspect of music to publicly present and discuss their music and experience.

The Festival will feature performers from Canada, the US and the Netherlands and more than 20 hours of musical performances ranging from folk to classical, pop to performance arts, as well as 30 hours of workshops on all kinds of topics.

Among the Festival highlights is the Saturday night concert, *Donne Borealis*, featuring perfomances from Sawagi Taiko, Winnipeg jazz pianist Marilyn Lerner, Vancouver's Academy Strings, harpist Rita Costanzi, and others. The Festival concludes Sunday with a *Gourmet Jazz Brunch* at Performance Works on Granville Island featuring delicious food and musical performances by local jazz artists Dee Daniels *[pictured above]*, Jennifer Scott, and June Katz with Bonnie Ferguson, Barbara Fisher and Colleen Fisher.

The events will take place at the Vancouver Academy of Music, the H.R. MacMillan Planetarium and Performance Works. Weekend passes for the full festival are available for $110. Single event tickets can also be purchased. For tickets, a full program or more information, call Women in Music at (604) 684-9461.

CLASSIFIEDS

PRO-CHOICE PRESS

Subscribe to *Pro-Choice Press*, the BC Coalition for Abortion Clinics' quarterly bulletin with news and information on the fight for abortion rights. $10 per year for individuals; $25 for groups—includes membership in the Coalition. To subscribe, write to 219-1675 W. 8th Ave, Vancouver, BC, V6J 1V2; call (604) 736-2800; or fax: (604) 736-2152.

SELF-HELP DIRECTORY

The Self-Help Resource Association of BC is seeking info about self-help or mutual aid groups to include in its annual *Directory of Self-Help Groups in Greater Vancouver.* Deadline, ASAP. For more info, contact Karen at (604) 733-6186.

BREAST CANCER EVENT

Two nights of talks on breast cancer will be held at the Waterfront Centre Hotel in Vancouver on **Mar 7- 8, 1997**. For more information call (604) 822-2626 or fax (604) 822-4835. Brochures to Breast Cancer: Myths and Realities will be avaliable in November 1996.

CLASSIFIEDS

RADICAL THERAPY

Feel like you're walking around in an undeclared warzone? You are! Come let that inner child out and release your warrior in group therapy with Sangam Grant. For info regarding group therapy for women and individual sessions,call 253-5007. A women of colour group will be starting late fall.

WOMEN'S FITNESS EVENINGS

Trout Lake Fitness Centre features an all women's evening **every Tues** from 7-9pm. The Centre is located at 3350 Victoria Dr. in Vancouver. The drop-in cost is $3.65, including sauna and whirlpool. For info call 257-6955.

WOMEN'S WEIGHT TRAINING

Trout Lake Community Centre is offering an intermediate "Weight Training for Women" program **every Tue** from **Sep 10-Oct 8** from 7-8pm. The costs are $18.25 plus centre membership. The Centre is located at 3350 Victoria Dr. Call 257-6955 for info.

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* Taiko meets "the wild west" in the Onna Zoku Bang band *
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