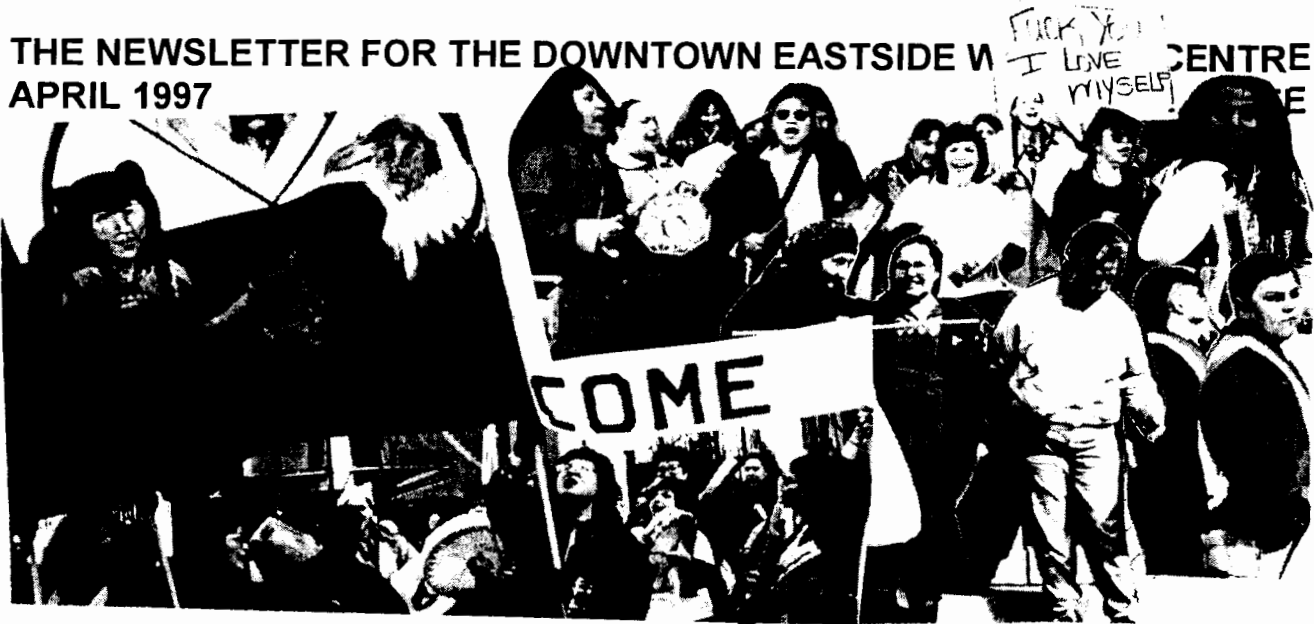


D.E.W. DROP IN

DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE WOMEN DO DROP IN

THE NEWSLETTER FOR THE DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE WOMEN'S CENTRE
APRIL 1997



MARCH 8TH, INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

International Women's Day held on March 8th had a good turnout from the Women's Centre. The day started off with a pancake breakfast at the Centre, which was well attended especially when word got out that Diane was the chef for the morning. Cynthia was the chauffeur, she provided the shuttle service to the main branch of the library.

The women of the Centre proudly carried the new banner which was completed a few weeks prior.

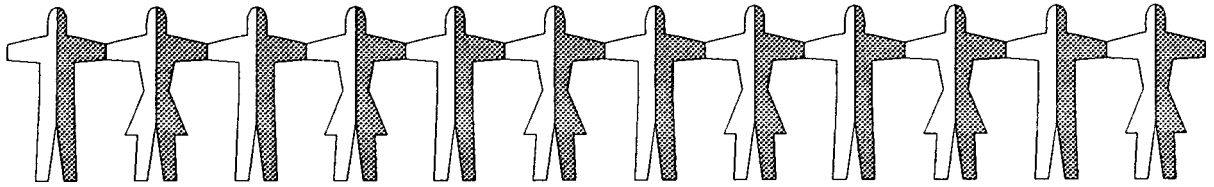
Compliments to the hardwork and dedication of the banner project crew

on their excellent work. Marlene took the still photographs and Chrisine Hutchinson took the video pictures of the event and the participants.

Maarion was a scheduled speaker, she spoke on issues specific to women of Downtown Eastside and expressed that the awareness level had to be stepped up on poverty and violence issues.

We were blessed with the presence of eagles flying overhead to pay tribute to our Aboriginal sisters speaking at the opening of the the event, thanks in part to Marion who was on the organizing committee. Thankyou to all of the women who attended the march. We look forward to next year and may all of our voices be heard in the meantime!

2



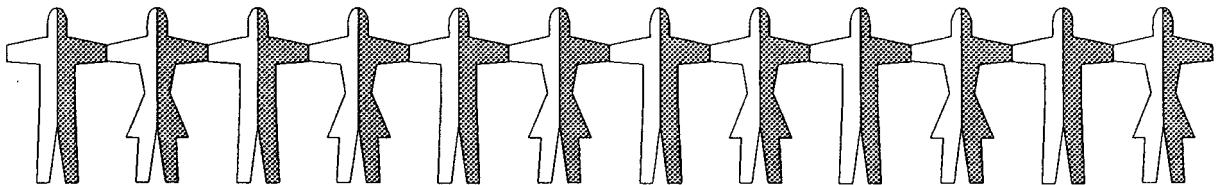
SWEAT LODGE FOR WOMEN

For those women who are interested in having a sweat lodge in the Downtown Core it is happening. A sweat lodge is a sacred place where people go for cleansing and healing. The lodge is about waist height and you sit inside. It is really dark inside so you can go within and connect with the Creator without being distracted. It is a place for prayer where hot rocks are brought in that help with the sweating process. This is a Native tradition that will be open to women of all races.

Marion and Reta have been working on getting it together. We WILL NEED some HELP. If you are interested in helping and/or have excess supplies below is a list of the things that we will need:

- ⊗ Blankets and or cloth to cover the lodge.
- ⊗ Fire wood!!! Keep your eyes open for free fire wood!!!!
- ⊗ A pick fork
- ⊗ A water bucket

**FOR MORE INFO. CALL:
MARION OR RETA
681-4786**



Press Release

B.C Native Women's Society

Jane Gottfriedson, President of the B.C. Native Women's Society, announced a Federal Court action against the Minister of Indian affairs over discrimination against women in the Indian Act and in the recently-introduced Indian Land Management Framework Agreement Legislation.

"The Indian Act continues to discriminate against women in several ways. We have been telling the government about that, asking them to remedy the discrimination, and finally drafting remedial legislation for them. But there has been no action in response to our requests. And now they are trying to pass the buck to the bands to deal with problem."

Plaintiffs in the action are the B.C. Native Women's Society and two individual native women, Jane Gottfriedson of the Lower Similmakeen band and Teresa Nahanee of the Squamish Band. The lawsuit concerns the situation of married Aboriginal women on reserves, who cannot get a share in the matrimonial home or an order for exclusive possession of the matrimonial home when their marriage breaks up.

The courts have held that provincial family laws, which provides these remedies to every other women in

Canada, do not apply on reserves because there is a conflict between them and the Indian Act. The lawsuit says that this legal situation discriminates against Aboriginal Women, and is contrary to the Charter of Rights. It is also a breach of the federal government's fiduciary responsibility to Aboriginal women.

Meanwhile, the federal government has signed agreements in principles with fourteen bands which will devolve responsibility for the administration of lands on reserve to the band level. The lawsuit asks for a declaration that the government cannot contract out of it's fiduciary responsibility.

Gottfriedson and McIvor were particularly angry that the federal government had not consulted them about the proposed land management framework agreement. 'We wrote to the government in November and asked to be heard during their consultations. The next thing we hear, it is March and they are telling us that is only one more teleconference hearing, in Edmonton just days later. There was no way that we could get there to make our views known. The high handed way the government treated it's consultation process--

Continued on page 10



VOLUNTEER NEWS

There will be a workshop on Conflict Resolution this month on Saturday, April 5th from 10:00 to 4:00, lunch provided. So there will be no volunteer night on Friday, April 4th which also happens to be the day of our Spring Dinner. Volunteers are needed to help with the set up, decoration, serving and cleaning. Starting in April there will also be a regular orientation day once a month. This is where all new volunteers will be trained and given information about the different volunteer positions and duties. April Orientation in on Thursday, March 24th from 9:30 to 2:00. If there are any old timers who are interested in helping Marlene and Cynthia in the training. All volunteers are invited to a Volunteer dinner on Friday, April 25th at Brothers Restaurant. Please let Cynthia know if you are attending. There will also be a special surprise. You will have to come to find out what the surprise is!!

VOLUNTEERS AT WORK



VOLUNTEER DATES TO REMEMBER

FRIDAY APR. 4

NO VOLUNTEER NIGHT

SATURDAY APRIL 5

CONFLICT RESOLUTION WKSHOP

FRIDAY APRIL 11

VOLUNTEER NITE

FRIDAY APRIL 18

DINNER AND SURPRISE

THURSDAY APRIL 24

NEW VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION

FRIDAY APRIL 25

VOLUNTEER NITE

LET THE TRUTH BE TOLD

If you ask me who my father is
I'll tell you I don't know
My father was a pimp
My mother was a pro
If you look at her now, she is 65
You never would think
That shriveled up old woman
made her money on her back
Fucking like a mink
I don't mean to sound angry
But I was always told

What will people think?

If I acted too flirtatious or too bad
Do as I say, not as I have done
For the person I have become
is cynical and bitter
The deceit never to be undone

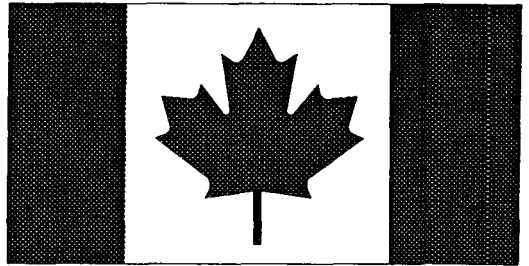
*Taken from Visions of...Technology, Society,
Humanity - DEWC Learning Group May 96*

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A CANADIAN

Not very much when
you're broke or sick
and not having the
person you love with you
Worse when they had
no Women's Centre
Think it would be the same
in any country -
only no warfare

Not yet in Canada

All these cutbacks
Not enough housing
for Seniors
Same everywhere
if you have no money



Good thing for us we have the
Women's Centre to come to
When it's closed many of us
just walk around
Nearly all of us depend on the Centre
for food, clothes
So got that at least
Wish there were more videos

THINK WE SHOULD HAVE ANOTHER MARCH TO PROTEST CUTBACKS

I was born in Romania, Europe, 49 years ago. Romania used to be a very beautiful country (and still is, with warm people. However I never felt that it was really my country because, I am Jewish. I was a minority and unfortunately a persecuted one. I wasn't given equal opportunities, and in spite of the fact that I cherished the language, customs and traditions I never felt totally accepted no matter what. This is why, in spite of the fact that I have a thorough knowledge of Romanian Culture, I do not consider it

my own.

Twenty years ago, I was very fortunate to come to Canada, and I had the opportunity to start a learning process not only about one culture but three, English, French and Native. It is a lifelong project, very enriching, interesting and enlightening. Since my arrival I have felt very welcome by all the different groups and a feeling of belonging has developed. I feel at ease in the three of them this is why being a Canadian is such a wonderful experience.

DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE WOMEN'S CENTRE
44 East Codova St., Vancouver
APRIL 1997

LUNCH SERVED
DAILY AT 12:30

REGULAR PROGRAMMING

AIDS - Margareth from AIDS Vancouver will be here every Mon. at 2:00. To answer your questions or for support.
Learning Group - Every Monday. With Professor Suzanne.
Battered Women Support Services - Tues. at 5pm to provide support and resources to women who have been affected by violence.

Kathy the Nurse - is in every Wednesday from 1:00 - 2:00.

Alcohol and Drug Support Group - Wednesday from 5:00 - 8:00, do you have or had a drug and/or alcohol problem. This may be the place to get some support, no preaching or guilt trips.

Law Student - There will be no Law Students in this month.

Newsletter Development Group - meets every Thursday morning at 11:00 to work on the DEW Drop In. The Centre newsletter.

Women's Voice - Thurs. 1:30. Let us know what you think about the Centre. Your opinions and ideas are needed.

Women Surviving Together - Thurs. 5:00 - 8:00 Healing Circle and support group for women.

Raffles - Fridays at 1:30 or 2:00. Items which are not clothing items that have been donated to the Centre are raffled.

Volunteer Nights - Every Friday from 5:00 - 9:00 just for volunteers to hang out, do activities and workshops.

CRAFTY WORKSHOPS - Materials provided

Ceramic and Tile Painting - Every Monday. Make something that you can use everyday or paint a tile that will be installed in the 'New' Centre when we get one.

Banner Project - Wednesday morning 11:00, contribute to the growing DEWC banner. Make your own panel.

Beading with Leona - Every Wednesday, 1:30 pm. Learn how to bead, expand your skills or just share ideas.

Dreamcatchers with Julie - Every Thursdays. Trap those bad dreams. Learn new styles and use a variety of different materials.

Fabric Arts with Freeda - Every Friday morning. Learn to do your own sewing and alterations and also to knit and crochet.

OUTINGS - Usually on Tuesdays. Also stay tuned to the Activities Board for RUSH tickets to events.

Apr. 1 at 2:00 - We're going to the Vancouver Art Gallery to see the permanent show as well a special exhibition on Landscapes.

Apr. 8 at 1:00 - A road trip out to Mission to visit the Indian Friendship Centre, visit the medicine wheel and other stuff.

Apr. 15 at 2:00 - Another Bowling day. You can play pool if you are not interested in Bowling.

Apr. 22 at 9:30 am - Day trip to Gambier Island on the Sunshine Coast. We will take a ferry from Horseshoe Bay, food provided.

Apr. 29 at 7:00 - Theatre outing, The Threepenny Opera a musical at the Arts Club Theatre.

SUN	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SAT
		1 2:00 Vancouver Art Gallery 5:00 BWSS	2 11:00 Banner Project 1:00 Kathy the Nurse 1:30 Beading 5:00 Alcohol and Drug Support Group	3 1:30 Raffle 2:00 Dreamcatchers 5:00 Women Surviving Together	4 SPRING DINNER 12:00 - 3:00	5 10:00 - 4:00 Volunteer Workshop Conflict Management
6 2:00 Video	7 2:00 AIDS Van. 2:00 Tile Painting	8 2:00 Mission Cultural Centre 5:00 BWSS	9 11:00 Banner Project 1:00 Kathy the Nurse 1:30 Beading 5:00 Alcohol and Drug Support Group	10 1:30 Women's Voice 2:00 Dreamcatchers 5:00 Women Surviving Together	11 10:30 Sewing and alterations 2:00 Raffle 2:30 Video 5:00 Volunteer Nite	12 CLOSED
13 2:00 Video	14 2:00 AIDS Van. 2:00 Make stuff out of clay	15 2:00 Bowling 5:00 BWSS	16 11:00 Banner Project 5:00 Alcohol and Drug Support Group	17 1:30 Women's Voice 2:00 Dreamcatchers 5:00 Women Surviving Together	18 10:30 Knitting and crochet 2:00 Raffle 2:30 Video 5:00 Volunteer Nite	19 CLOSED
20 2:00 Video	21 2:00 AIDS Van. 2:00 Paint Ceramic	22 9:30 Day trip to Gambier Island on the Sunshine Coast 5:00 BWSS	23 CHEQUE DAY CENTRE OPEN 11:00 Banner Project 5:00 Alcohol and Drug Support Group	24 1:30 Women's Voice 2:00 Dreamcatchers 5:00 Women Surviving Together	25 10:30 Knitting and crochet 2:00 Raffle 2:30 Video 5:00 Volunteer Nite	26 CLOSED
27 2:00 Video	28 2:00 AIDS Van. 2:00 Paint Ceramic	29 7:00 Theatre Outing - The Threepenny Opera	30 11:00 Banner Project 5:00 Alcohol and Drug Support Group	Monday 10:30-5 Tues. 11:30-5 Weds. 10:30-5	Thurs. 10:30-5 Fri. 10:30-5 Sun. 12:00-5	

Sign up sheets are put up at the beginning of the month, even though there is a waiting list chances are there will be space available.

NOTE: Sometimes things get canceled or set up on another day make sure to check

"Update sheet" on the front chalk board and Activities Board***



Thelma and Louise meet Christime squared and Maureen

News From Your Advocates

WELL, spring is here, and so I thought it might be a good idea to usher in some good news with the change of season. Of course, the first and **best** news of all is that the NDP government's 3 month residency requirement has been repealed. That means that any of you who have moved to BC within the past three months and been denied **GAIN** benefits because you "hadn't lived here long enough," should go to your Social Services office and get access to benefits right away.

If you still encounter any difficulties, ask one of the Advocates here at the Centre to help you approach the Ministry and we will do our best to get them moving on your case.

AS you may know, the Carnegie Learning Centre lost its funding and has been closed down. The government next set its sights on the Hastings Learning Centre and suggested charging fees of up to \$800.00 to each student who wanted to complete a GED program. There was such an outcry that Paul Ramsay, the Minister of Education, did an about-face and has (for now) guaranteed the Centre's funding and therefore **Your Right** to a free education.

If you are interested in going back to school and need help getting the process underway, or if you want information about getting your GED or any job training, please see a Mental Health Advocate. We can give you tips about what is available and to what you are entitled.

DID YOU KNOW :

that if you have applied for your Canada Pension Plan (CPP) benefits and are waiting for them to begin, Social Services cannot cut back your GAIN benefits? That means that they cannot reduce the dollar amount of your monthly cheque or put you onto hardship while you are waiting for CPP, but must keep you at your usual benefits level. If you are currently waiting for your CPP and are having problems with your Financial Aid Worker, please come and see one of the Advocates.

DID YOU KNOW :

that if you have an ongoing and permanent physical or mental health problem that prevents you from being able to work, you can ask your doctor to help you get Handicapped Benefits from GAIN? This is also true if you are a Person With AIDS.

If you are a PWA, you may also be able to get extra money from Social Services to help you buy items to deal with your medical condition; ie: money for laundry, clothing, diapers, ensure or extra food, etc. Ask a Mental Health Advocate for more information.

DID YOU KNOW :

that in order to receive your GST rebate cheques you must complete and send in your income tax forms every year?

DON'T FORGET!

The following local organizations will help you file your tax forms:

INCOME TAX
DERA: Mon - Fri, 9am - 4 pm;
Carnegie: Mon - Fri, 6pm - 10 pm;
1st United: Appointments please;
Dwtwn Eastside Senior's Centre: Saturdays, Members only, please.

DID YOU KNOW :

that if you can get a lift from somebody with a vehicle, you can pick up a **free bed** from Sleep Country Canada? Every Monday thru Friday, from 9 am until 6 pm you can pick up used but clean mattresses and box springs from the warehouse outlet in Richmond at #10 - 4751 Shell Road. You might want to telephone them first to make sure they have the size you need, at 244-9171.

ON behalf of the other Advocates, Christine Wood and Maureen Bourke, have a great month, and don't hesitate to drop in and see us if you need help with legal issues, GAIN or your FAW, health or housing, or somebody to listen and talk with you.

Christine Hutchinson,
Mental Health Advocate



Continued from page 3

we understand they have had virtually NO input from Aboriginal women's groups in this consultation -- reflects their generally dismissive attitude to Aboriginal women".

Viola Thomas, speaking for the United Nations in support of the lawsuit, "The problem of internalized racism against Aboriginal women has existed since the introduction of the Indian Act in 1876. This Act is a tool by the federal Government to divide and conquer our Aboriginal Peoples. It defines who our citizens are and it is based on a patriarchal system that did not honour and respect our matriarchal cultures. This system has forced our cultures to not always act in ways that value or pay homage to Aboriginal women. Because many married women leave reserves to go to their husband's reserves. If their marriages break up they often have to leave the community they have lived in with their husbands and children for many years. This is just one example of how the Indian Act has forced Aboriginal peoples to discriminate against our women.

Fay Blaney, speaking for the National Action Committee on the Status of Women and the Aboriginal Women's Action Network also supported the action. She said, "Colonialism and historic injustices can easily be

dismissed as the sins of our great grandparents. But who will be answerable for the institutionalized racism that Aboriginal women endure today? Is there any accountability for the systemic abuses which results in our disenfranchisement from our cultures? Our banishment from our homelands? The genocidal laws and policies of the state are completely hostile to the perspectives and statue of Aboriginal women. And the actions of our leadership clearly indicate that the patriarchal intentions of the colonial agenda has been successful. The position taken be the Assembly of First Nations in Bill C-31 discussions and the Constitutional discussions are evidence of an ingrained patriarchal mentality. I challenge our male-dominated leadership to return to our traditions of honouring and respecting our women. Can they support the BCNWS in this court challenge? And I challenge our "Indian Act masters" to devise a meaningful process that would end century long genocidal practices. After all, Aboriginal woman have rights too".

For more Information contact
Sharon McIvor, BCNWS
(250) 378-5969
Jane Gottfriedson, BCNWS
(250) 499-7897



CALLING ALL NEWSLETTER FANS

Do you like the *NEW* Newsletter?
Have a funny/sad/interesting story?
Want to be part of the fun?
Have something to share?
Hand drawn cartoons?
A beef to air?

There will be a weekly meeting for all those interested in contributing to the Newsletter. We need help with typing, photos, drawing, layout, the works. It is fun and you will get to produce a totally cool zine for women by women.

EVERY THURSDAY MORNING 11:00 - 12:30

OUR NATIVE TONGUES - CREE

Tansi	Hello	Tanis Atowea Kea?
Okima-kan	Chief	How are you?
Pemeetsew	Come and Eat	Tanti Ewe Tote in?
Nahpeesis	Little boy	Where are you going
Iskweesis	Little girl	Ke sak Ki Hi-tin
Nikowee	My mother	I love you
No Towee	My father	Astum Ota
Aske-kan	Reserve	Come here
Keete-ayuk	Elders	Ka kewets Hi tin
Ni Mis	My sister	Can I help you
Nis Teese	My Brother	Ki note Ne Me Tus Tse?
		Would you like to dance

I am from Northern Saskatchewan, a reserve called White Fish Lake. Mostly everyone speaks the Cree Language, even the little children. We learn Cree before we learn English and it is the language of our hearts. The reserve itself has quite a legend behind it. Our tribe migrated from the Rocky Mountains which is now Alberta, and settled in Northern Saskatchewan. It is very important for people to speak their own language. It brings us closer to the Creator and our culture. We can find strength and expression that is taken away by English.

by Reta Blind



★ **START
HERE**

**DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE WOMEN'S CENTRE
SNAKES AND LADDERS**

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