



Victoria Status of Women Action Group

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NEWS

Special IWD Supplemental Issue



INTERNATIONAL
WOMEN'S DAY
1 9 9 0

Lou-ann Glendale, artist

This design is a mixture of contemporary and traditional Kwagiulth Indian design. It is a 'portrait' design of a woman of great wealth, social standing, prestige, and beauty: these ideals have been chosen by the artist to reinforce the notion that all women should be seen in this light. These ideals are evident by the labret on her lower lip, and the chief's hat at the top of the design. The chief's hat was worn only by women who acquired this right through their family. The right to wear this hat might be given to the eldest son or daughter, who in turn would carry on this tradition by passing this right on to his or her eldest, thus maintaining the family's ranking in society. The labret was to show a woman's beauty; it also represents great prestige, and high social standing.

Encased in the outer circle are hands; the meaning here is twofold: firstly, the ovoid shapes at the top represent growth through life. The second meaning is to represent hands of women from around the world joining together to form a unity.

To the right of the woman portrait is our planet, to show the international theme of the design.

Our theme for International Women's Day this year, as reflected in our logo, is the unity of women on our planet and the reclaiming of feminine values in order to heal our earth. Through our unity we can promote the principles of nurturing, caring and intuition. We and many other groups are seeking to reintegrate these values into our society, for these are healing attributes and are shared by all human beings.

As women we have a special role because we are often at the heart of the community, peace, environmental and human rights groups. We have also made our presence known and felt in such previous male strongholds as medicine, politics, law and business. Subsequently, many of these areas are changing the way they do things.

We are now witnessing a shift in our consciousness as we scramble to save the earth. It will take a great deal of nurturing and caring to undo the damage that has brought the human race to the borders of distinction.

International Women's Day is a celebration of these values, our accomplishments and of womanhood - a celebration that we hope you will attend, participate in and help to bring to fruition.

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- * A Calendar of International Women's Day Events
- * "A Look Back At IWD Celebrations in Victoria"
- * "An Aboriginal Woman Speaks"

**LESBIAN RIGHTS: A RENEWED
BATTLE FOR ALL WOMEN
By A. Bond**

Not too long ago, a friend spoke to me of an encounter she had had with a sister in the women's movement. Her story triggered some thoughts which I feel should be shared on the occasion of International Women's Day. The two were speaking of current women's issues, of recent events and tragedies. They commiserated about various setbacks in the struggle, about their mutual frustrations, about their fears. At one point my friend brought up the specter of the struggle for 'Lesbian Rights'. Her companion looked at her quizzically, and innocently asked "Lesbian Rights? I didn't think that Lesbians needed any rights particularly."

Some feminists feel that Lesbians' struggles belong with 'Gay Rights', not with 'Women's Rights'. The struggle for Lesbian rights, however, is closely linked with women's struggle for freedom from sexual oppression. Like all women, Lesbians face sexual oppression in the form of violence, and double standards regarding sexual behaviour. Lesbians often lead 'double lives'. They are forced to conceal their identity. They cannot hold hands in public or demonstrate any kind of affection for their lover; they cannot share heartaches and loving moments with their friends and colleagues; and they cannot live openly, as heterosexuals do, for fear of violence, or of losing jobs, friends and family.

During International Women's Day, we celebrate our common herstory, our mutual struggle, our pains and our sorrows, as well as our achievements and our triumphs. It is also a day to consider our future struggles, to look to a new decade with renewed passion in our cause. We must start this new era with greater attention to those minorities that we, in the women's movement, often disregard because of

their disempowerment: Native Women, Women of Colour, Immigrant Women and Lesbians all play an increasingly vital role in our struggle. There are many women's voices in our society, and they must all be heard on their own terms.

Lesbians are one such voice. Lesbians have played, and continue to play, a dynamic and vibrant role in the women's movement. Everywhere you look in women's organizations, in collectives, in the struggle, Lesbians commit their energy, resources, and devotion.

This special day for women, International Women's Day 1990, should mark the moment that feminists in Victoria, in Canada, worldwide, embrace the struggles of their Lesbian sisters. Let us work together so we might remember this decade as the time when Lesbian Rights were included openly in agenda of the women's community, when feminists recognized the contributions of their Lesbian sisters and supported their struggles, so that the Lesbian voice rang with the power and strength of all of the Women of Canada!!

IWD Shirts For Sale

Don't Forget to Purchase a Commemorative International Women's Day 1990 t-shirt, sweatshirt, or cotton crinkle shirt, for sale at the SWAG Office and at some IWD events!! They bear the IWD 1990 logo, designed by Lou-ann Glendale, and come in black, red and white!!

T-Shirt	\$15
Sweatshirt	\$30
Cotton Crinkle	\$24

Available in Large and Extra Large!

All shirts are 100% cotton!!



Women Stood United, Women Stand United

International Women's Day is a special day to honour women. On March 8, 1908, 30 thousand women textile workers in New York went on strike to bargain for economic security and a better quality of life. When the strike began every shirtwaist factory in New York City was an open shop. When it ended, 13 weeks later, 312 shops had full contracts.

Two years later in 1910, thanks to the efforts of Clara Zetkin, March 8 was proclaimed International Women's Day in Europe. Since that time, and especially with the resurgence of the western women's movement in the 1960's and 1970's, women around the world have claimed March 8 as a day of protest, solidarity, and celebration. In 1975, the United Nations proclaimed March 8 as International Women's Day.

On March 8, 1990, people everywhere will celebrate the struggles and achievements of women worldwide. We, the IWD Committee, invite you to join in this celebration and participate in local International Women's Day events.

International Women's Day is organized in Victoria by the dedicated women of the ad hoc IWD committee, and is funded by the profits from IWD shirt sales and by the contributions of various organizations.

If you are interested in joining or assisting the IWD Committee in facilitating events - including organizing workshops, ticket sales, poster, kitchen help, door work, etc. - please call the SWAG office.

An Aboriginal Woman Speaks

International Women's Day means different things to different women. To me it's a time for celebration of our achievements as women, and especially of ourselves as women.

Traditionally, society has cast women in certain roles, and in recent decades there has been both a collective and individual push for change. It is apparent to me, and I wish to emphasize that these are personal views, that throughout all this change the unique qualities or gifts that women bring to society have endured. The gifts that I speak of I will highlight in the context of aboriginal women.

In traditional aboriginal societies women were symbolically characterized by the circle, a sacred symbol that is still a powerful symbol in much of native culture. The circle has no corners and represents the feminine approach to problem solving, i.e. the ability to look at all aspects of a problem and to find a solution that is for the good of all. Also, in a circle there is equality. Women themselves will generally bring the quality of equality to their endeavours.

The journey of aboriginal women is the journey of all women. It is a journey of healing, to have our valuable contribution recognized without compromising those gifts that make us unique.

An Aboriginal Woman

International Women's Day (IWD Committee) Sponsors

Victoria International Development Education Association (VIDEA)
Action Committee for Women in El Salvador
Victoria Status of Women Action Group
Greater Victoria Disarmament Group (GVDG)
Lynn Hunter, MP - Constituency Office
Women for Economic Survival
Victoria Voice of Women

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 1990 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

All events are wheelchair accessible
Please call SWAG (381-1012) to confirm any event before attending

Friday March 2 6:30 pm no host bar 7 pm dinner

NETWORKING DINNER/GLOBAL FEMINISM TALK

Speaker: Julia Goulden who works with the BCTF and CIDA on Global Education issues. Oak Bay Beach Hotel \$22/\$20 Childcare on advance request.

Sponsor: Sooke Teachers Association, Status of Women Committee

Sunday March 4 2 pm

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY MARCH

Congregate at Centennial Square, Victoria City Hall to hear Gretchen Brewin, Mayor of Victoria; Elizabeth Cull, M.P. Oak Bay/Gordon Head; and Susan Brice, Mayor of Oak Bay speak! A variety of entertainers will follow before the march begins!!

Sponsor: IWD Committee

women and children welcome

Monday March 5 7:30 - 9:30 pm

POETRY READINGS

Five authors - Susan Musgrave, Marlene Cookshaw, Patricia Young, Linda Rogers, and Elizabeth Woods - will read from their own works.

106 Superior Street

Sponsor: IWD Committee

donations welcome

Monday - Thursday March 5 - 8 approx. 7 & 9 pm

UVIC FILM FESTIVAL

Women's feature films. Films may include: The Sorceress, A Question of Silence, I Heard the Mermaid Singing.

Place/Sponsor: UVic Cinecenta, \$3-\$5

Monday - Friday March 5 - 9 Daytime

WOMEN'S MOVIES

Entertaining and educational women's movies and videos showing every day. Watch for details at UVic or phone SWAG. UVic Cinecenta and SUB Upper Lounge.

Sponsor: UVic Women's Centre

Tuesday March 6 8 pm

INDIGENOUS CULTURES AND WOMEN

Anne Cameron, Patricia Keyes, Lavina White

UVic Begbie Building Room 159

Sponsor: Environmental Studies Department

Wednesday March 7 6 - 9 pm

NATIVE DINNER AND STORYTELLING EVENING

An evening of salmon, bannock and storytelling around the fire pit at the Long House, featuring local and up-island storytellers.

BC Provincial Museum grounds, SW corner of Douglas and Belleville.

Sponsor: The Native Friendship Centre and IWD Committee

Thursday March 8 8 - 9:30 am

BREAKFAST/PRESENTATION

Gwen Brodsky speaks on "The Canadian Charter Equal Rights for Women, One Step Forward, Two Steps Back" after breakfast.

UVic Faculty Club, \$8/\$6.50. For tickets call 384-4705, 380-6533

Sponsor: National Association of Women and the Law, UVic

Thursday March 8

6-10 pm

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY POTLUCK DINNER

Entertainment, artistic and other displays, music, Raging Grannies, and the good fun women have when they get together. Bring something yummy to eat!! Coffee and tea supplied. Childcare available, but bring toys for the tots! St. John's Church Hall, 1611 Quadra (at Balmoral)

No alcohol, no smoking

women and children welcome

Sponsor: IWD Committee

Thursday March 8

All Day

WOMEN'S RADIO PROGRAMMING

CFUV 102 FM Uvic's radio broadcasts special women's programming.

Friday March 9

7:30 pm

COFFEE HOUSE/TALENT NIGHT

Coffee house/open microphone talent night. Join us and read a poem or story, try a stand up comedy routine or play a song on your favourite instrument! Place: 'The Cove', 1923 Fernwood (at Gladstone)

Sponsor: IWD Committee

Saturday March 10

Afternoon

EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOPS

- 1) "Women Creativity and Political Change", Terry Padgham (VOW)
- 2) "Kathie Kollwitz" a slide/tape show about this social activist's life, by Beth Hill (VOW)
- 3) A men's workshop organized by and for men to discuss their role in feminism and healing the planet...and more!!

Saturday March 10

8 pm

A WOMEN'S DANCE

Boogie with your friends to the music of Keychange!

Cedar Hill Recreation Centre, 3220 Cedar Hill Road

(limited admission - get your tickets early!)

Cash Bar

Tickets \$7/\$10 at SWAG, VIDEO, Everywomans Books, Uvic SUB General Office

Sponsor: IWD Committee

Friday March 16

6 pm

DINNER-THEATRE

Vegetarian dinner with brown rice and...! Entertainment: a dramatic poetry reading by Dorothy Livesay and friends, a puppet show called "The Day They Parachuted Cats on Borneo", and the World Premiere of the Raving Beauties Theatre. 106 Superior Street, \$12/\$10

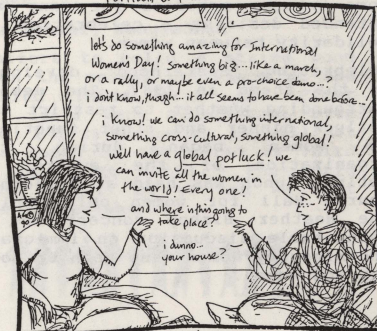
Sponsor: Voice of Women (VOW)

Portrait of panic



left up to consensus.

Portrait of panic



wanted: two billion sets of cutlery.

A Look Back at IWD Celebrations in Victoria

The celebrations marking IWD in Victoria have gone through a number of transitions. In the early 80's, recognition of IWD by women activists took the form of one-day "fairs", with workshops on topical issues (some open to men and women, some to women only), and the fairs routinely attracted over two hundred people.

In 1985 the first potluck dinner was held, thought to be a pretty daring undertaking at that time. About 80 women attended the dinner, held at the Unitarian Church. A display of women's art, a film screening, an attempt to learn Ukrainian folk dancing, and information tables by such diverse groups as Saanich Native Women, Voice of Women, unions, peace groups and international development support groups all provided entertaining and educational fare for the evening. 1985 was also the first year that the calendar of events organized around IWD was published by SWAG's IWD Committee.

In 1986, the theme was "A Day in the Life of a Woman"; the potluck dinner was held at the James Bay Community Centre. Singers, skits, information tables and speakers were the entertainment for the evening. The dinner was open to both men and women. Men who had arrived earlier were accommodated, leaving many women without a space. This left some unhappy memories for many who attended desiring a celebration of solidarity between women.

Celebrating "Sisterhood" developed as the theme in 1987. The debate surrounding whether to restrict the potluck dinner and other functions to women began during the organization of the events. A potluck lunch was held at St. John's Church Hall for women only, while the Heather Bishop concert and a round-table discussion on immigrant and minority women were open to both men and women.

The first IWD march in Victoria was held in 1988, inspired by feminist activist Debby Gregory. Debby Gregory first marched in the late 70's, amongst a throng of thousands, on a snowy day in London, England. Victoria's inaugural march attracted perhaps 150 people, who marched in a loop from the YM/YWCA building to the Legislature grounds and back. The theme that year was "Abortion: A Woman's Right to Choose". Speeches on the issue were the focus at the Legislature. Upon return to the 'Y', a slide show on third world women was held.

Last year the potluck dinner was again held at St. John's, and was an enormous success, with Gretchen Brewin (mayor for Victoria) and Lynn Hunter (newly elected MP for Saanich/Gulf Islands) speaking. Again, many information tables were set up, and entertainment included Sheila Norgate's comedy slide show "The Housewives' Olympics", a poetry/prose reading by Helen Potrebeko, and singing by Becky Berenson. The march went from Centennial Square to the Legislature.

This year, we continue the tradition of celebrating International Women's Day in Victoria, with a march, a potluck dinner, and many other activities, which all promise to add vitality and meaning to this special day for women.

(with gratitude to Debby Gregory and Anne Preyde for their admirable recall)

SUPPORT VICTORIA STATUS OF WOMEN!!

Victoria Status of Women is selling t-shirts! The shirts come in Large and Extra Large and are available in five delicious colours: Teal Blue, Black, White, Fuschia, and Ecru!! T-shirts bear the Victoria Status of Women logo, and cost \$13 each.



Women Working for Change

Reprinted from the Videa Newsletter
[Editor's Note: Listening to the voices of women from around the world on International Women's Day symbolizes the solidarity and strength of the global women's movement. The following are the voices of women from developing countries. They help us to consider the global nature of women's oppression and to celebrate the universality of women's strength.]

Dorothy Makasa, Zambia

When I had problems with my husband, all I did was cry.

But one day, I got angry, I talked back to him.

I have never cried since.

When I found discriminating laws in my work as a woman, I felt defeated when I could not change the situation, so I changed jobs. I found the same discrimination in other jobs.

One day I got angry, I talked against the system, I mobilized against the system. I will not change jobs unless they fire me.

When I faced the questions of poverty in my community, in my society, in my country, I could not speak in the meetings, I was too shy, too timid, too insecure to say what I felt.

But one day I got angry at the systems that perpetuate poverty at all levels and I spoke out. I shall never keep quiet again.

Today I have discovered more voices speaking for change in many different languages. I have become part of that voice.

Connie Nkomo, Zimbabwe

Connie is eloquent and clear: the rural Zimbabweans with whom she works are not helpless, not hopeless, and certainly not passive. They refuse to be victims. It pains Connie to see the lurid pictures which are the dominant image in Canada of Africa and Africans. These realities of suffering exist, but they do not represent the African

reality, nor is the pity they engender the response Connie wants from Canadians

We will not take it anymore - being the poor cousins. If you see a picture of a starving child, pull it down...Poverty is a man-made problem, an internationally organized crime. We are capable of feeding ourselves.

Cherry Padilla, Philippines

Women who are organizing self-help projects are being harassed, many have been arrested, some have been killed. Despite all this, they continue to organize to improve their communities. They have acquired strength in the fact that they have to unite with each other.

Cherry explained that the major barriers to organizing women in the Philippines is the intense militarization which is taking place across the country, uprooting entire communities. The other major barrier is poverty: women spend most of their time just trying to survive. In spite of this, GABRIELLA, the organization with which Cherry works, manages to support women's self-help efforts across the country.

There is poverty in Canada, but a different kind of poverty. In the Philippines, it's different, ours is more a poverty of hunger, we don't have food, or we don't have all the resources. Poverty in Canada is one which kills the spirit of the people...which makes people hopeless.

Farida Akhter, Bangladesh

The effort to build a string bond between the social activists of the so-called 'Third World' and 'First World' is a very significant step indeed. But from now on, we will not divide women of the world as Third World or First World - the world belongs to all of us and we must change it together.



Thanks to the IWD Committee for all
their hard work!!

Bonnie Robinson
Catherine Joyce
Hallie Walsh
Joanne Fox
Kathleen Mackinnon
Kathryn Fairfield
Lisa Eccles
Marla Abbott
Marianne Alto
Susan Albion
Van Buchanan

SUPPLEMENTARY
ISSUE OF SWAG
NEWS
Editing, Production
and Design
Allison Bond

INTERNATIONAL
WOMEN'S DAY
1 9 9 0



a women's dance
with
KEYCHANGE

\$10/7

8:30 pm Saturday 10 March
Cedar Hill Recreation Centre
3220 Cedar Hill Road, near Finleyson

TICKETS AVAILABLE AT SWAG 381-1012, VIKEN 385-2333 AND OTHER OUTLETS