

Presenting Our New Logo for a New Millennium



Spring 1999

Infusion

Vancouver Women's Health Collective

The Collective

The Vancouver Women's Health Collective is a volunteer based, charitable, non-profit organization which has been in existence since 1972. We work to promote and support the idea of women helping women to help themselves, and to help women develop a pro-active approach to their own healthcare. We carry out a range of services and activities for women in Greater Vancouver and across BC, including a health information centre and helpline, health practitioner, holistic practitioner and therapist files, educational work, support groups, publications, lobbying and advocacy.

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Infusion

Infusion, Vancouver Women's Health Collective newsletter, is a forum to connect us with our members and the community at large around women's health issues and activities at the Collective.

Submissions relevant to women's health or well-being are always welcome and participation in this form is much encouraged. Leave any messages at the collective, or drop a note in our newsletter box. *Infusion* is published three times a year.

All opinions expressed are those of the writers and not necessarily those of the VWHC.

Newsletter Committee

A.J. Gray
Brenda Kent
Anne Merrett-Hiley
Lynn Wyminga
& the Wild Wimmies of the
Vancouver Women's Health
Collective.

A Fertile Spring

by Brenda Kent

Spring is in the air! What better a time to discuss FERTILITY? This is not going to be an article on how to increase chances of getting pregnant, or about how to avoid getting pregnant. It is about discovering the miracle of fertility and the empowerment that comes with understanding the reproductive cycle.

Fertility Awareness Method (FAM) is used by some women to achieve or avoid pregnancy. For others who are not having sex with men and are not interested in conception, Fertility Awareness can be a great way for her to get in tune with her body. Practicing FAM trains women in *bio-feedback* - tracking subtle changes in her body and being able to attribute them to various stages of her fertility cycle. For example, some women can tell when they are ovulating just by the feelings in her body and her soul, even if she is not currently charting her cycles. (*But it is not encouraged to rely on body sensations alone if you are trying to prevent pregnancy - charting regularly is very important*).

So, what is FAM? It is a method of determining when ovulation occurs - thus when a woman is fertile - by observing fertility signs daily. Women's bodies are incredibly well synchronized to promote fertilization of an egg. Every hormone starts a whole range of activities that work together to make the body most fertile during the time when the egg is present to be fertilized. It is because of these well-harmonized events that women are able to detect very real and very specific changes in their systems that represent our most fertile and least fertile times.

An egg can live up to 48 hours after ovulation. Sperm can live up to 5 days in a fertile system (a fertile system is one where there is enough wet cervical fluid). So, there is basically a period of up to 7 days where a woman is potentially fertile!

Cervical Fluid - A woman practicing FAM checks her cervical fluid a few times a day to determine her pre-ovulatory fertile period. The fluid that is released from glands in our cervix changes throughout our cycle. After menstruation, the cervical fluid is normally dry, or sticky. This is not conducive to the survival of sperm, so it is not fertile fluid. As women approach ovulation, cervical fluid becomes more wet, (creamy, slippery, or stretchy). This allows the sperm to survive and wait for ovulation to occur. Sometimes women who are not familiar with

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Fertility (continued)...

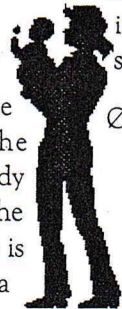
cervical fluid will mistake creamy cervical fluid for a vaginal infection, or they get 'weirded out' by stretchy egg-white fluid. After ovulation, the cervical fluid quickly dries up and ceases being fertile.

Temperature - Body temperature is taken everyday when a woman first wakes up, before even getting out of bed. (A great excuse to hit the snooze alarm while you wait for the thermometer to take its reading!) Body temperature fluctuates throughout the cycle, but the most prominent time is the day after ovulation. Once a woman ovulates, progesterone increases which causes an increase in temperature. Since an egg lives up to 48 hours after ovulation, we are not fertile approximately two days after the temperature rises.

Cervical Position - A third sign of fertility that is charted is the position of the cervix. The cervix rises high as women become more fertile, it gets softer and the opening (cervical os) becomes wider. A woman can insert her fingers into her vagina and feel her cervix each day. This sign is considered an optional sign because the changes are not as precise as with temperature or cervical fluid, but it is a great way to stay in tune with the reproductive cycle and really understand the body's responses.

FAM takes practice. Most women have not been trained in listening to their bodies - usually women are told that symptoms are all in their heads and that their bodies hide things from them. So, the first time a woman hears of FAM, she may be skeptical because she finds it hard to believe that her body can reliably tell her when she is fertile. But it can! In fact, for women using FAM as contra-ception, the effectiveness rate is 94.8 -

97.3%. This is about the same success rate as the birth control pill. Likewise for women



trying to conceive, 71.4% of the women who have had a previous pregnancy will achieve pregnancy in the first cycle.

Being able to listen to their bodies and TRUST that what they are hearing is true can be an incredibly empowering experience for women. For more information on fertility awareness, see the following sources:

- Ø SERENA Vancouver - teaches FAM for \$30.00 per couple/individual. Phone : 527-3882.
- Ø "Taking Charge of Your Fertility" (1995) is a book by Toni Weschler which is well-written, informative and clear.
- Ø "Womens Bodies, Women's Wisdom" (1998) by Christiane Northrup has a section on fertility awareness, and information about infertility.

(Copy of both books, and numerous others on the topic are available for browsing at the VWHC Info Centre.)

If anyone has a fridge they are not using, we would love to take it off your hands. We are in dire need of a standard size fridge for the office. Please call the VWHC at 736-4234 and we will arrange to pick it up. Thanks!

DANCE ENLIGHTENMENT

Body Awareness through
Movement & Sound

*Release Negative Energy

*Ground Body and Essence

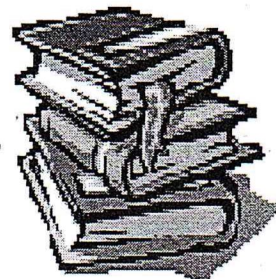
Enhance Creativity by Attuning to Your
Own Rhythm * * *

For information on upcoming
classes or workshops, please
contact:

Angela 602-0474



In January, the arrival of a cookbook, "Survival Cooking," came along with the following letter. We'd like to thank Mary Gordon for her generous and useful donation, located for your perusal at the Info Centre.



Dear VWHC,

I really enjoyed your Winter/98 issue of Infusion which arrived in yesterday's mail. In response to your articles on healthy, low-cost FOOD, I want to share with you a GREAT little 'Survival Cooking' Book. It's simple, healthy, straight to the point, and particularly usable (accessible) for young people 'setting up' and cooking for themselves for the first time — or for those of us intimidated or impatient with more sophisticated cookbooks.

Hope you enjoy!!

Mary Gordon

Call for Submissions *Art Show Space*

The Vancouver Women's Health Collective is pleased to announce that we have opened our space for women artists. We are looking primarily for women-centered art but will consider other themes as well. The shows will run for 4-6 weeks under contract guidelines. We will host an opening and provide some advertising as well as hanging materials. For details please leave a message for Tamara Flick-Parker @ 736-4234 and she will return your call in a timely fashion. We are excited about this new idea and look forward to hearing from all interested women.

Beginning the Healing Journey - Recovery from a History of Sexual Abuse

by A.J. Gray

The awareness that sexual abuse is a reality that many humans live with is becoming more prevalent day after day. More and more individuals are coming forward to voice their truth about the damage this horrendous crime has caused them. It can however seem to be a scary journey if one knows they have been abused sexually or they suspect they have been abused sexually and do not know where to turn.

One of the hardest parts on the journey of healing sexual abuse is admitting to yourself that it actually happened or that you were really damaged by it. Sexual abuse is damaging and the greatest gift victims of sexual abuse can give themselves is believing that it actually occurred and that you want to do something about it. An adult, sibling or peer forcing you to perform oral sex and a parent bathing you and while doing so fondles and/or presses hard on your genitals is sexual abuse. These are the very actions, just like "being raped or otherwise penetrated"¹ that invoke the feelings of shame, fear and secrecy that a sexual abuse victim is left with. It is this shame, fear, secrecy and the words "DO NOT TELL!" that are embedded in the victim that keeps them from telling their story which in turn keeps victims from seeking and receiving the help they need and deserve.

The healing process is like a nursery tale with a rhyme and reason all of its own. This process is different for every sufferer but the issues the victims face are common to most. (It is important to note that when the term victim is used it is meant in the sense of victim of the crime sexual abuse not that the survivors are powerless and beyond help.) The effects of sexual abuse are often disguised to the victims in the idiosyncratic behaviour mechanisms one learns in order to cope with the abuse. One of the first things we do is escape our body. After the abuse we feel that our body has let us down so we decide not to live in it and choose instead to live in our heads. The most obvious times of this occurrence is when we are talking to someone and suddenly we can't hear anything they said. It's like we are there and then we are not there but we don't know where we went. Sometimes we create fantasy lives in our heads. We don't share this with others for fear one might think we are crazy. We also like to deny and minimize what's happened, or sometimes forget that it happened for significant periods of times through our lives starting from childhood. What is also happening though is that we aren't able to be intimate with our partners, certain sexual acts or ways our partners touch us bother us and cause us to shut down completely. This may prevent us from enjoying sex, or the comfort of being with someone who loves us. Depression, feelings of helplessness and powerlessness are also signs of sexual abuse issues that have been unresolved. Sometimes we can mistake this depression for being something we were born with yet it is just as likely it is a symptom of what has happened to us. This depression caused by suppressed anger can also lead to physical ailments such as headaches and migraines to more extreme physical ailments such as cervical dysplasia and cancer.

Alcohol, drug abuse and eating disorders are often a direct result of sexual abuse. Using food and substances are a way for the victims to distance themselves off from their feelings and emotions enabling them to deny the effects of the abuse to themselves. These coping mechanisms keep us powerless and do not allow us to enjoy the richness of friends, career and all the good things life has to offer.

There are many stages one will go through when they decide to consciously heal their sexual abuse. Some of the emotions one will experience are a great sense of grief and loss for the childhood (family life) that we imagined we had in order to cope with the abuse. Pain, sadness and anger are also powerful emotions that one will experience. Going through this process by taking tiny steps, one at a time, will eventually bring freedom within and a deep sense of the wonderful people we truly are, not the horrible person we think we are because of the shame we carry. The power the shame and secrecy had over us will become less and less until it is no longer an issue.

Through the healing process it is important to find healthy outlets of expression. Talking to a therapist, counselor and/or finding a peer support group that feels right to you is important and can be extremely helpful in the initial stages of conscious healing. It is important to remember this is your healing journey no one can tell you the right way, who is the best person or what is the best thing to do to help you. Trust yourself and the truth you know within you. The more you trust yourself, however frightening, the easier the steps will become. Creative expression is also a beneficial and necessary part of healing. It is often difficult to put our feelings in words because the abuse effects us on all levels spiritual, mental and physical. Learning to tap into your creative force will enable us to access the emotions we carry that our trapped in our unconscious which contribute to our unhealthy ways of coping that we are not fully aware of. Dancing, writing, painting, singing, working with clay are excellent ways to do this. Allowing ourselves to create without over analyzing or telling ourselves "It's not pretty enough" but just doing what our spirit moves us to do, empowers us.

At some stage in your process you may decide to confront the people who abused you. It will be easier to cope with the denial you may receive from your abusers when the rawness of what happened to you has healed enough so that you can and do accept your truth. The truth that you were abused and it affected you. Knowing and accepting the truth of what happened to you can be a long process. It is easy to move in and out of the denial of the effects of our abuse. The more you accept it and feel what you need to feel, the more power you feel, and the more power there is in the truth you know. This will help you to live the abundant, healthy and peaceful life that is your birth right.

Watch for the upcoming Sexual Abuse Education Workshop provided by The Vancouver Women's Health Collective.

The Vancouver Women's Health Collective has an excellent resource library feel free to come in and research during Collective hours.

1. The Courage to Heal by Ellen Bass and Laura Davis, Copyright 1998, Harper and Row.

Another Suggested Title:

Repressed Memories -A Journey to Recovery From Sexual Abuse by Renee Fredrickson, Ph.D Copyright 1992 Simon Schuster.

Community Resources

- * Family services of Greater Vancouver 874-2938
- * Support for women in abusive relationships 536-9611
- * Surrey associations for survivors of abuse 469-4965



Wimmin's View

This is a forum for stories on women's personal journeys of healing. Your stories are welcome.

Thyroid and Ovarian cysts

A woman's odyssey of health

by Vanessa Wiebel

For over 13 years I have lived carrying a cyst on my right ovary and am now finding answers, which might apply to other women as well. It is not scientifically proven but researched from self-observation, reading classical and alternative literature on ovarian cysts and health provided answers.

At the beginning of my journey I was not informed and followed what I was told: to have the enlarged (2 inches) cyst removed through endoscopy. Only 2 weeks after the operation, which was a painful experience, the ovarian cyst was back; and the specialist operating on me strongly advised me to have my ovary taken out. I rejected that choice (not presented as if there were options) and am reinforced in my decision as I found out how vital both ovaries are for a woman's wellbeing.

Over the next years I observed when the pain would set in and relate it to my cycle, activities, and stress levels. I kept track of times of pain and its quality, its size, and even went through a long stretch of blood tests to find a reason for the cyst development. Checking my estrogen and progesterone levels looked like a promising option at first, as my progesterone level was considered high. Then one day I went for the blood test, not as usual by bicycle but by transit. The progesterone levels were remarkably lower. *We found out that the hormone levels are immediately effected by our activities and emotional state and can have high fluctuation curves throughout one day. This fluctuation is barely taken into account when tests are being done.* So progesterone was ruled out as a factor.

As I tracked the occurrence of pain I found that sometimes the pain would relate to ovulation time or just before my period. I also noticed the pain I felt depended on my bowel movements and the bowel constancy. Five years had gone by and I immigrated to Canada. The stress of immigration took its toll on my health. I became lethargic, my circulation was low, I ate and did not gain

weight, my cycle became irregular, my thoughts were clustered, and I was suffering from nearly uncontrollable mood swings. I found my lower neck swollen and went to have my thyroid checked.

While waiting for the results I had started to increase my iodine intake, through fish and kelp (but no more than 300 mg a day). I felt better with each day. The thyroid is the master-gland in the body to regulate any form of growth or cell development. Taking iodine for a week I realised the pain in my abdominal region was decreasing. My period was lighter, I had less cramps and muscle aches, and less constipation. I was excited.

My test results came back 3 weeks later saying that nothing was wrong with my thyroid. Was the iodine was a placebo?

With my knowledge, I asked my GP to make sense of it. According to the data from the lab there was nothing wrong with me, but she said many other women had said eating iodine had helped them, but this was not scientifically proven. Many of these women were vegetarians who also did not eat a lot of salt (in which most Canadians receive their daily iodine ratio). I had become a vegetarian and did not eat salt about the same time that I noticed the enlarged cyst developing.

According to the European norm I would be considered Hypo-thyroid. To avoid my thyroid enlarging or giving up I would need to take 300 mg of iodine a day for the rest of my life.

Going to the Vancouver Women's Health Collective Library I found a book holding some very valuable information on women and hormones. *Hormones, Woman's Answer Book* is the only book I ever found considering women's bodies having a different metabolism and rhythm than men.

I learned about the endocrine system of which the thyroid is part. The glands work in co-operation with each other. I learned that the pituitary gland and its frontal lobe regulates the thyroid as well as the hormone which releases the follicle. I had found the interactive triangle that was out of balance within me. *Here is a key never before men-*

tioned in any texts on ovarian cysts. If there is no messenger telling the follicle to release into the tube it will simply grow. According to the book the hypo-thyroid (under-functioning) will not make eggs properly. In my case it would make sense to think it just continued to grow.

I began to puzzle all the info I had together, and noticed the following observation:

The cyst fluctuated in size depending on my stress level. The thyroid's need for iodine provided the link. In Europe iodine is put into the water so everyone drinks it, tap or bottled. In Canada it is only in table or sea salt. I was not getting my normal iodine supplies. My organ regulating my cyst growth was not functioning and enlarged one follicle to the size of 2 inches.

In this whole process I had learned I am my best adviser get to know my own body functions and to read them, gather all the possible information and combine it with my own knowledge and observation to find answers. Most of all I developed a trust for my basic instinct and intuition.

I now found a way through craniosacral therapy and acupressure to release my pituitary gland and even do it myself. It works well for me. I have made sure to eat regularly and have 300 mg of iodine every day, tablets or kelp and fish. I make sure I find time everyday to just sit and meditate, stretch or be quiet to allow my adrenals to relax and recharge. It does not take much time, only the effort to develop a routine and it becomes natural like brushing teeth or morning showers.

I do still have some pain on my abdomen but now I found out and have the confirmation from my RMT and Acupressurist it is most likely a flaring nerve irritated by the scar tissue I received during the endoscopy. I wonder how many other women have gone through the similar procedures with out getting the relief for what they went in for and ending up with more trouble than they started. The balance of the body is amazing and delicate I am definitely an advocate of using the least intrusive tools of our health knowledge before opening the body up.





INTRODUCING...the Community Health Advocates

The Vancouver Women's Health Collective is thrilled to introduce the women who have taken on the role as Community Health Advocate (CHA). These advocates are speaking out for women in their communities for safe, respectful and appropriate health care.

These CHAs are all volunteers, donating their time to help women in their communities feel empowered to speak out for their health care needs. Violence and disrespect in the health care system will be reduced when women find their voice and feel confident in *demanding* proper treatment. Women in these communities are encouraged to contact their CHA about their health care needs, health concerns, rights in the health care system, and where to go for more information. Call the VWHC to find out more!

♀ Hana Hussein is a health advocate for **SOMALI WOMEN**. She is available for drop-in advocacy at the South Vancouver Neighbourhood House on Mondays from 9am-2pm and Saturdays from 1pm - 4pm. To leave a message for Hana, phone the Neighbourhood House at 324-6212.

♀ Sadie Kuehn is a health advocate for **LESBIANS, BISEXUAL WOMEN, ABORIGINAL WOMEN, WOMEN OF COLOUR AND POOR WOMEN**. She is available For appointments at various times and locations. Contact her at 266-5414 or 729-7815.

♀ Fatma Acktary is a health advocate for **UBC WOMEN and FARSI-SPEAKING WOMEN**. She is available at the UBC Women's Centre for drop-in advocacy on Mondays and Fridays from 10:30am - 1:30pm, or to leave a message for Fatma at 822-2163.

♀ Sonia Bilku and Gaitry Kaul are health advocates for **SOUTH ASIAN WOMEN**. They are available for drop-in advocacy at the South Asian Women's Centre on Mondays and Tuesdays from 1pm - 5pm. Women can drop-in at the centre, or phone 325-6637.

Health Advocates for **WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES** are available for advocacy at various times. Call 878-3211 to leave a message and an advocate will return your call.

♀ Diane LeClaire is a health advocate for **ANY WOMEN OF THE DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE**. Diane is available for drop-in advocacy on Thursdays, from 4pm - 8pm at the Downtown Eastside Seniors Centre, 509 E Hastings. Women are welcome to leave a message for Diane at 258-4109.

♀ Elena St.John is a health advocate for **LATIN AMERICAN WOMEN**. She is available for appointments at the Multi-Cultural Family Centre. Please call 254-6468 to make an appointment with Elena.

♀ Ahlay Chin is a health advocate for **CHINESE WOMEN and MENTAL HEALTH CONSUMERS**. She is working out of her home and various centres in Richmond. Leave a message for Ahlay at the Richmond Women's Resource Centre at 279-7060 or at 273-1989.

We regret to say good-bye to Mercy Kimari and Sheila Gamblen, who have moved on to new and exciting opportunities.

The VWHC would like to extend **SPECIAL THANKS** to the following organizations who have endorsed this project by providing a safe space, and support for the CHAs to do their advocacy work :

*The Centre

*South Vancouver Neighbourhood House

*Richmond Women's Resource Centre

*UBC Women's Centre

*South Asian Women's Centre

*Multi-Cultural Family Centre

*Women with Disabilities Health Action Group

*Downtown Eastside Senior Centre - Vancouver Second Mile Society

LUNA PADS

Special thanks to Madeleine Shaw of LUNA PADS! She generously donated boxes of LUNA re-useable menstrual pads for women who visit the Vancouver Women's Health Collective. The wild wimmin of the VWHC wish her all the best in her new line of positive menstrual products!

Nina's Bookmarks

Need a laugh?

Lotta Links

<http://www.markomix.com/lottalinks.html>

Index of about 1000 comix - classics, alternative comix and links to many other indices on the web. Download a laugh.

Cyberdyke's Cartoon Corner:

<http://www.qworld.org/DykesWorld/Cartooncorner.html>

Lesbian laffs and comic links.

Want to put up a 10 - 20MB web page for free?

Try:

<http://www.fortunecity.auraline.com/new/index.htm>

<http://xoom.com/home/>

<http://www.angelfire.com/lx/mrtwig>

<http://www.webjump.com/>

Non-Toxic Household Cleaners

<http://www.mamagaia.com/mgocleaning.htm>

Alternative non-toxic cleaning products can be made from common household ingredients in minutes

"Cancer Information Service, how can I help you?"

For most people, the diagnosis of cancer is a frightening and confusing experience. When a doctor says, "you've got cancer", often nothing else is heard. The Cancer Information Service can help fill the information gaps for patients or family members.

Information can help patients cope better with their disease and allow them to take an active part in their treatment and follow-up care.

Information can be mailed, faxed, e-mailed or explained over the phone to callers the very same day the call is made. Every caller is encouraged to phone the CIS again if he or she has additional questions or concerns.

A Chinese speaking service is also available on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 6:30pm to 8:30pm for BC residents who speak Cantonese and Mandarin. CIS Information Centre currently serve the public from 9am to 6pm, Monday to Friday.

The Cancer Information Service welcomes your call at 1-888-939-3333. The CIS responds to everyone: cancer patients, health professionals, students, volunteers, teachers, and community organizations. The CIS looks forward to hearing from you soon.

Committee Happenings...

Information Centre

1. The Info Centre is pleased to announce the addition of approximately 50 new books and videos to our library collection. Video titles include **Exposure: Environmental Links to Breast Cancer**, and **Is It Hot In Here? - A Film About Menopause**. Videos may be viewed at the Collective during times when the Info Centre is open. Book titles include **The Canary and Chronic Fatigue**, **Our Bodies, Ourselves**, **Rewinding Your Biological Clock**, **The Safe Shopper's Bible**, **Spiritual Midwifery**, **When Madness Comes Home**, and **Women Talk About Gynecological Surgery**. We continually welcome your suggestions for additions to the library.
2. A review of calls to the Info Centre reveals a need in the Lower Mainland for a **post-hysterectomy support group**. Any readers aware of such a group or interested in beginning one are encouraged to contact Anna-Lisa Boye, Info Centre Coordinator. If needed, VWHC space may be made available for such a gathering.
3. The Info Centre accepts health questions by e-mail at vwhc@axionet.com. A volunteer will be in twice a week to direct the e-mail messages. As a result, responses to e-mail inquiries may take a bit longer than those left on the voice mail.

Info Centre Hours:

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday: 10:00 am - 1:00 pm

Tuesday, Wednesday: 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm

Saturday: 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Call the Info Centre for additional hours

Publicity Committee

The Publicity Committee would like to start off by saying an extra special thank-you to **Nancy Kleiber** of Florida who made a generous donation to the VWHC on our last direct mail out! What a wonderful gift to help us do the work that needs to be done. Nancy was one of the first volunteers at the VWHC and was in to visit us over the summer. Thank you so much for your generous support!

The direct mail campaign was successful and we raised very close to the \$5,000.00 we were hoping for. Thank you to all who donated to the uniqueness that is the VWHC: we wouldn't be here without you.

Congratulations to **Deb Eilers** whose design was chosen for the VWHC's new logo. Thank you Deb for your beautiful work. With our new beautiful logo, we are in the process of working on layouts for our advertising campaign for this fiscal year. We will be taking out an ad in **The Courier** and **The Georgia Straight**.

The publicity committee continues to display local female artists in the VWHC information centre.

Also, another special thank you to **Alannah Krutina** who donated one of her pieces of art to the VWHC for our enjoyment.

The Publicity Committee would like to welcome back the beautiful smile and great energy of **Twyla Lalonde**.

Looking forward to spring time and sunshine!

Administration & Budget Committee

By the time this spring issue of *Infusion* reaches you, the Vancouver Women's Health Collective will have its 1999/2000 budget in place. Thanks to all VWHC volunteers that worked tirelessly this year to get us back on track. We are all looking forward to a smooth year ahead.

Education Committee

The Education Committee continues with the monthly Education Sessions and Movie Nights. The new year brought in a new education series, focussing on the reproductive years, including Fertility Awareness, Midlife Pregnancy & Childbirth and Midwives & Doulas.

Our movie nights have included: "The People vs. Larry Flynt," "Once were Warriors," and "The Famine Within," and "Fire." Kristin Campbell and Nicola Stewart have thankfully taken over coordination of the movie nights.

The Education Committee would like to thank Anne Reinaldo and Carolyn Main for doing a very well received presentation on Depression for the University Women's Club of Richmond at the end of January. We would like to offer this presentation to others who are interested.

Regular Education Committee meetings are still the 4th Monday of the month at 7pm. We are going to start having meetings at different places around town to make it more interesting. Please call the Collective to find out where we will be.

The Menopause Kit is now available, with many thanks to Marion Smith and Anastasia Williams for all their hard work! (Congratulations to Anastasia and Nigel on the birth of their healthy baby girl!)

☺☺☺☺☺ Calling All Readers ☺☺☺☺☺

Infusion is seeking FEEDBACK and SUBMISSIONS. If you are literarily- or artistically-inclined and have work you'd like to submit, or if you'd simply like to share your views with us, feel free to contact the Newsletter: #219-1675 West 8th Ave. Vancouver, BC, V6J 1V2, (604) 736-4234, vwhc@axionet.com

To all VWHC members, the 1999 **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** is Tuesday, June 8, from 6:00pm to 9:00pm (1 hour snack & 2 hour meeting.) See you there!



SEAD
Self Expression And
Dance Therapy Centre

Individual
Sessions,
Workshops
& Classes

Sunita Romeder M.A.

Tel: (604) 254-6795

Vancouver Women's Health Collective Membership Form

Categories of VWHC Memberships:

Volunteer Member
(Sliding Scale – pay what you can up to \$25/year)

Associate Member
(\$10-25/year)

**Health Practitioner/Therapist/
Business Member** (\$50/year)

All VWHC Members:

- *Receive the VWHC's Newsletter *Infusion*
- *Receive Invitations to Special Events
- *May Participate at VWHC Committees & the Annual General Meeting

Volunteer Members:

- *Library Privileges
- *Expected to become involved with at least one VWHC Committee or Project
- *Responsible for attending one Bingo shift per year

Health Practitioner/Therapist/Business Members:

- *Entitled to One Free Newsletter Listing

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____
(street) (city/province) (postal code)

Category: _____ Fees Enclosed: _____

Donation: _____ (a charitable tax receipt will be sent to you)

Please return to: VWHC Women's Health Information Centre
219-1675 West 8th Avenue, Vancouver, BC, V6J 1V2

The Wild Winiir of the VWHC would like to recognize the following women for their commitment to our organization :

Staff

- Caryn Duncan - Administrator
- Anna-Lisa Boye - Info Centre Coordinator
- Jennifer Kolarik - Info Centre Cleaner
- Brenda Kent - Community Health Advocate (CHA) Coordinator
- Sarah Harrison - Nursing Practicum Student

Volunteers

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| Angela Gray | Lynda Dechief |
| Anastasia Williams | Lynn Wyminga |
| Anne Merrett-Hiley | Marion Smith |
| Brenda Kent | Moira Fulton |
| Christine Campbell | Nicola Stewart |
| Cindy Weeds | Nina Tryggvason |
| Claar Prinsen | Pam Fichtner |
| Debra Eilers | Renee Fernandez |
| Erin Elliot | Sharon Coates |
| Frances Suski | Sharon Lee |
| Janet Ip | Shea Pertman |
| Jean Kang | Statia Michaels |
| Kelli Forster | Tamara Cowan |
| Kristin Campbell | Tamara Flick-Parker |
| Lu Hansen | Twyla Lalonde |

An Energizing Spring Cleanse



Anne Merrett-Hiley

Spring is a time often associated with renewal, rebirth, and rejuvenation. As the earth brings forth her bounty, we are called to sweep away the weight of winter both within and without. One tonic or cleanser for the body that I have found most helpful is the following. The ingredients are simple consisting of gingerroot, cayenne pepper, lemon, and maple syrup.

Gingerroot has been a time-honored remedy to settle upset stomachs, stimulate digestion and relieve aches and pains. The fiery bright red herb cayenne, has been reported to aid digestion, prevent heart disease and quell certain types of chronic pain. Lemon contains vitamin C, which aids the body's natural healing system. Finally, maple syrup is a natural sweetener that contains minerals and makes the tonic taste good! While this may sound like an odd combination it actually tastes great and is a very invigorating drink.

To make, cut up 2-3 inches of gingerroot into good-sized chunks. Place in 1 liter of filtered water and bring to a boil. Simmer for 10-15 minutes (the longer the stronger the ginger flavor). Add the juice of one lemon. Simmer for about 10 more minutes. Pour into serving cup and add ¼ tsp. cayenne pepper and 1-2 tsp. Maple syrup (to taste). Sit back and let the energy flow!

THE MENOPAUSE KIT HAS ARRIVED!

The VWHC has put together an updated menopause kit for women of menopausal years to use as a resource guide to finding the path to healthfulness that is right for them. In this kit there is valuable information on Hormone Replacement Therapy, non-medicinal treatments, herbal remedies, exercises, and other information. The cost of the kit is \$10, and there are other materials available to add to the kit for a small fee. We hope that you find this kit a useful guide in making your menopausal experience a positive one.

~Anastasia Williams

Upcoming Education Events

April 10, 1999 BREAST HEALTH & BREASTFEEDING

Pam Fichtner, RMT, will talk about general breast health. As well, a trained breastfeeding counsellor (tba) will talk about the pros/cons of breastfeeding and some of the common problems that can arise during the breastfeeding relationship.

May 8, 1999 OSTEOPOROSIS & PHYSIO/MASSAGE THERAPIES

Pam Fichtner, RMT & Kristin Campbell, MCPA will discuss the benefits of Massage Therapy and Physiotherapy for people dealing with osteoporosis.

June 5, 1999 MENOPAUSE

Marion Smith will talk about menopause from her personal experience and present the information that has been gathered in the creation of the new and improved Menopause Kit (available at the Information Centre.)

Sessions will continue to be from 11am to 1pm. Reservations are encouraged as space is limited. To register and for more information, please phone 736-5262 and leave a message. A \$3.00 donation is suggested.

Movie Nights

Movie nights will be on the fourth Thursday of the month at 7pm. Next month on April 22 (Earth Day) we will be hosting the movie "Who's Counting?" by noted New Zealander Marilyn Waring and discussing feminism and the environment. The VWHC would like to thank Cinephile Video (4340 Main St. 876-3456) for their donation of videos for our movie nights.



Visit the VWHC Information Centre

#219-1675 West 8th Avenue, Vancouver Info Line: 736-5262

The Info Centre has a wide variety of health information and volunteers available to help you research your own health issues.

Check out our Resource Centre! *Women's Health Library *Health/Holistic Practitioner or Therapist Files

* Health Information Files *Videos on Women's Health *Helpful volunteers

* VWHC Publications (including the new Menopause Kit!) *'The Keeper' Menstrual Cup *Reusable Cloth Menstrual Pads

Staffed exclusively by Volunteers, the Info Centre is open:

Monday 10:00am - 1:00pm Tuesday 6:30pm - 8:30pm Wednesday 10:00am - 1:00pm & 6:30pm - 8:30pm

Thursday 10:00am - 1:00pm Saturday 1:00pm - 4:00pm

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