

Winter 2007



Auckland
**Women's
Centre**

Auckland Women's Centre

Gossip

Contact us

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Ph 376 3227
info@womens.org.nz
PO Box 78271
Grey Lynn
www.awc.org.nz

Centre hours

Monday to Friday
9am - 4pm

Library hours

Saturday 11am - 1.30pm

Thanks

To the South Auckland
Charitable Trust for funding
Gossip and
our community education
brochure.

Teen Parent Service Coordinator

We are thrilled to have Margaret Stewart join our team as our Teen Parent Coordinator. Margaret was previously employed by Barnardos as the Coordinator of Family Support Services North/West, and was with them for seven years. She has two papers to complete to gain her Degree in Social Work at Auckland University.

Margaret's role at the Women's Centre is to provide holistic support for teen parents and their children to improve outcomes for them and their children. Margaret will work collaboratively with young parents, empowering them to help themselves.

This includes practical support, guidance, goal setting and linking them in with other service providers.

Margaret's role will also involve identifying gaps in services to teen parents. Having a social worker Undertaking case management work with teen parents will help to inform and complement our current community development work with these women.



Freedom from violence against women and children

Congratulations to Sue Bradford and the thousands of individuals and organisations who campaigned to ban the corporal punishment of children. While there is currently some confusion surrounding the new legislation at the moment, we are confident that in future years kiwis will take pride in this step towards a violence free society.

The Women's Centre is part of a coalition campaigning against domestic violence which is organising a memorial on Women's Suffrage Day, Wednesday, 19 September. Our message is that domestic violence is preventable and everybody can play a part in creating a peaceful society. Contact us if you would like to help the campaign.

Landmark sex discrimination case

Caitlin Lewis, with the support of the Human Rights Commission, recently won a landmark case against a large, South Island, privately owned company. Talley's Fisheries refused her the opportunity to apply for the position of filleter, their justification being that the role required employees to lift fish bins weighing up to 30kg, which they viewed as unsuitable employment for a woman. Caitlin, alongside the vast majority of women staff

at the Motueka processing plant, was obliged to accept a job as a trimmer, which is paid significantly lower and is less physically demanding. In response to the June verdict, Talley's Fisheries boss, Andrew Talley, made the truly enlightened statement that "in any job there are attributes that suggest it will be more likely to be done by either a man or a woman ... pole dancing being one and fish filleting being another".

Staff Teen Parent Service Coordinator: Margaret Stewart, teenparent@womens.org.nz. Young Women's Advocate: Shelley Fraser, youngwomen@womens.org.nz. Projects Coordinator: Annalise Myers, youngparent@womens.org.nz. Administrator: Elizabeth Morey, admin@womens.org.nz. Centre Coordinator: Leonie Morris, akcentre@womens.org.nz. Frontline and Programmes Coordinator: Amelia Rothwell, info@womens.org.nz.

Collective Abigael Vogt, Alison Greenaway, Annalise Myers, Donna Nuttall, Emily Trent, Gabi Ugalde, Leonie Morris, Paulette Benton-Greig, Sarah Greenaway, Shelley Fraser.

At the Auckland Women's Centre...

New ACC registered counsellor

Anthea Randell, an experienced sexual abuse counsellor, recently joined our team of professionally trained and supervised counsellors. A flat fee of \$35 is charged for ACC clients and a sliding scale of \$30 to \$80 based on your income for other clients. A diverse range of issues is catered for. Please ring the Centre for an appointment.

Information and resources

The Centre has a great deal of information about services, programmes and activities offered in the community. We also have contact details for women-friendly doctors, lawyers, natural health practitioners and counsellors. Lesbian activities, events and services are advertised and the *Tamaki Makaurau Lesbian Newsletter* is available.

Health services

In conjunction with WONS: Nursing, Education & Health Promotion Services, we have now extended our smear tests and breast examinations service to include full consultations on women's health issues, such as menopause and PMS. Appointments available at the Centre on Friday mornings once a month. Next available dates are: 27 July, 24 August, and 21 Sept.

Therapeutic massage

Available for beneficiaries and other women on low incomes on Mondays between 10.30am and 2.30pm, for

an hour long session. Cost is \$25 for beneficiaries and \$40 for non-beneficiaries.

New library books

We have recently purchased many new library books including several on our relationship to food, healing after sexual assault, and other women's health and well-being titles. New fiction includes wonderful books by, Anne Tyler, Fiona Farrell, Marion Molteno, Tracy Chevalier and Rachel Seiffert. It costs \$5 for beneficiaries and between \$10 and \$20 for non-beneficiaries to join the library per year. Books are issued for a month, and there is a library returns box in the alcove on the porch if you return books after hours. As well as being open during the week the library is also open every Saturday from 11am–1.30pm.

Board games nights

Dust off those board games and bring 'em on down for an evening of board games. Meet new people of all ages, make new friends and have a bit of fun. With winter upon us, this group has reduced its activity to the third Wednesday each month, 7.30pm—9.30pm, fee \$2.



Book club

A place for women looking for good literature and good conversation. This group meets monthly, on the third Sunday of every month, 4.00pm—6.00pm, no charge.

Courses and Groups

New this term is a one and a half day **knitting workshop!** The workshop is aimed at teaching you the basics of knitting, as well as giving you the chance to have a go at dyeing your own wool. The tutor, Margaret Lewis, is a self-taught contemporary knitwear designer. All materials are provided. You can even keep your wool and needles so that you can take them home and practice your skills. This is a perfect opportunity to learn to knit creatively rather than just traditionally. Prepare to be inspired!

We are also very pleased to be offering a workshop to compliment our fortnightly contemporary craft group **Craft Grannies**. The Craft Grannies workshop is a creative workshop for young women. Come and try your hand at some contemporary crafts. You will get the chance to learn how to stencil your own patch,

make your own badges and design and make your own rockin' cross stitch.

Also on offer this term are our ever-popular **Walking Back to Happiness, Coming Out, teen mum's support group, women's self-defence workshop and self-defence for 7-12 year old girls**.

Our **board games night** and **yoga** classes are "pay-as-you go" so you can attend when it suits. Our Wednesday **yoga/pilates/stretch** class has changed from the morning to lunch-time (12-1pm), so you can now pop in for some relaxing exercise during your lunch break!

For details of our community education programme go to our website www.awc.org.nz or call 376 3227.

Sexist Burger King Adverts harmful—not funny

By Shelley Fraser and Deborah MacKenzie

Burger King (BK) was recently forced to remove a widespread advertising campaign featuring harmful images and messages about women, as a result of extensive public backlash and a large number of complaints laid against the company to the Advertising Standards Authority. The adverts were screened in two phases. The first featured young women dressed in skimpy bikinis riding horses along the beach. The second were even worse, with women in bikinis presenting cheques, posing as professionals wearing bikinis in their workplace, and showering together in a fountain. The denigration of women escalated as the campaign progressed.

Kiwis not amused

The advertisements were considered extremely offensive by a number of people throughout New Zealand. Both men and women made their complaints heard to the Advertising Standards Authority, stating that they found the ads offensive, and in particular that they were disgusted by the way in which they denigrated women. In addition, Tracey Vickers made a powerful statement in a Whangarei BK outlet in early June. She asked counter staff to remove an in-store poster featuring three young women in bikinis riding a hamburger, and when they refused, she took it down herself. She was later arrested for wilful damage, but was not convicted of any formal charges at her hearing on 21 June. (Hopefully the judge wanted to give the police a message that their time could be better spent elsewhere!)

The BK advertisements were clearly in breach of the codes of the Advertising Standards Authority. The 'Code for People in Advertising' parts 3, 4, 5 and 6 make particular reference to the boundaries in place to limit advertising material that is offensive with regard to gender, stereotypes, sexual appeal and humour and satire.

The sexualisation of women in advertising

Fundamentally, the advertisements portrayed women in sexualised ways that took power from them as individuals and marketed them 'on a plate' for the male gaze, to whom BK were clearly appealing as their consumer audience. Some of the key arguments in support of the sexist advertising argued that the backlash which ensued was simply political correctness gone wrong; one writer to the *New Zealand Herald* pled for the "fun police" to back down and not be "too serious". Meagan Denise, Marketing Manager for BK, stated that people who found the ads offensive were suffering from a humour crisis and did not pick up the tongue in cheek humour in the ads (i.e. that the girls were wearing bikinis in totally unreal situations). When interviewed on *Campbell Live* she argued that opponents to the ads will have to face seeing girls in bikinis, quite possibly eating burgers, at the beach in summer.

However, the reality is that the extreme incongruence of women featured in sexualised poses, in little clothing and positioned in 'unreal' situations, is neither funny nor ironic, but merely builds on a long history of using women's bodies to seduce men into buying certain products - alcohol, cars, and even newspapers. In an age where some argue that equality between men and women has at last been achieved, we still see images in the media which all too frequently reduce women to mere sexual objects. In the BK promotion, the advertisements attempted to depict the women as pieces of a body, rather than a whole person. The cameras routinely focused on their breasts and torsos, and even featured one shot of a young woman solely from her neck down, thus reducing her to a headless sexual object.

Interpreting sexist media and harmful images

Sadly, there is nothing new or innovative in BK's marketing approach. However, the fact that we are able to locate the genre in history does not mean that some readers will be able to critique or relocate themselves outside of the dominant understandings of what women's bodies mean in the public domain. The BK marketing campaign predominantly attempted to situate women as the 'butt of the joke' to others, and encouraged men to laugh and make fun of women in a way that takes power and agency away from women (particularly in relation to their sexuality).

"The advertisements portrayed women in sexualised ways that took power from them as individuals and marketed them 'on a plate' for the male gaze"

These adverts do not work as irony, in the way that, for example, some of *Borat's* sexism does. Young people seeing and hearing these messages learn the underlying rules as ones to apply in future relationships. These messages and images also reinforce the sexist attitudes already held by some adults. It can be extremely difficult for women and girls to achieve autonomy and any sense of control over the way their bodies are understood by other women and men. The reading of the female body is used every day to determine success in relationships, employment and status. There are a myriad of deeply entrenched power systems that work against women's ability to just 'be' in their bodies. Everyone that is concerned about the well-being of girls and women need to give BK the message that these adverts are not funny.

It is crucial that we take both personal and collective responsibility to hold the producers of harmful images accountable for their actions, and continue to protest sexist advertising which has once again come to be considered simply a mainstream advertising method.

WELL WOMEN'S CLINIC

Free

Cervical smear tests for women:

?Who are due for a smear test and are

Community Service Card holders

?Who have not had a test in five years.

Advice

On managing periods, PMS, menopause,
stress and incontinence using natural

remedies, diet and lifestyle

Consultations \$45 (½ hour)

Clinics once a month at Auckland

Women's Centre, Ph: 376 3227

and all Auckland areas

For more information

phone 523 0263



*Nursing, Education and
Health Promotion Services*

Angela Davis

Angela Davis, a former member of the US civil rights group the Black Panthers, spoke in Auckland recently to an enthusiastic and interactive audience. In 1970 Angela was imprisoned, allegedly for murdering a judge. Eventually, after a high profile international campaign, she was acquitted. Angela, now a professor at the University of California, is still a political activist, campaigning for women's and African American rights and for the abolition of prisons. She spoke of when the major manufacturing firms of the USA were outsourced to China, creating massive unemployment amongst men and women workers, particularly African Americans. Many of these people have joined the US Army to fight in Iraq. Others have ended up in US prisons including new "super maximum prisons". The US prison population is currently 2.2 million! Once released, even though they have served their sentence, they do not have the right to vote, helping to keep politicians like George Bush in power. Angela was inspirational, just as she was in the 1970s, when the Polynesian Panthers formed in Auckland, encouraged by the work of Angela and the Black Panthers in the States.

Is the Domestic Violence Act working?

Agencies belonging to the National Network of Stopping Violence (NNSVS) feel that the DVA is not working as it was intended. The number of women and children being killed and injured every year from domestic violence confirm this. These agencies have daily experience working with perpetrators and victims of domestic violence. Their main concerns are:

- ?? More Protection Orders being put on notice (not granted immediately).
- ?? Pressure from the Courts on women to agree to unsafe arrangements.
- ?? The rights of fathers to see their children being given priority over the rights of children to be safe from violence.
- ?? Women being sent to couple counselling and mediation before safety issues have been addressed.
- ?? Psychological abuse being ignored or minimised.
- ?? 50% of men sent to stopping violence programmes failing to turn up and this not being followed up.
- ?? The high cost of Protection Orders.
- ?? Protection Order breaches not being taken seriously.

Review of the DVA

The Government is about to begin a review of the DVA. The NNVS wants these issues addressed in the review:

- ?? Improved access to lawyers for women.
- ?? Advocates in every community to support women though the legal system.
- ?? Protection Order breaches having serious consequences.
- ?? Better recognition of psychological violence.
- ?? The safety of children given priority over fathers rights to access.
- ?? Men who fail to attend stopping violence programmes being called back to Court.