



Le Centre communautaire des femmes sud-asiatiques

Inside this issue:

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| Centre Update | 2-4 |
| Kurshid Begum Awan | 4 |
| Letter by Sofia Baig | 5 |
| Identity Crisis | 6 |
| Autonomous and Independent Exhibition | 7 |
| Calendar | 8 |

Qu'en pensez-vous?

What do you think?

- Let us know your thoughts about the bulletin.
- Que pensez-vous de notre journal?
- We encourage you to send in your stories and articles for upcoming newsletters in any language by the 25th of every month to: adisun3@gmail.com
- Écrivez - nous à adisun@gmail.com

HAIL AND FAREWELL!

"Farha, how about we start our goodbye bulletin piece with, **"Extra! Extra! Read all about it! Exciting News!"**

"Yeah... yeah... we can do that... Orrrr, we could start with, **"Passing the Torch"**. Naila, where does that expression come from? Is it politically problematic to use this expression because it is rooted in the Olympic games, or does it date back to the Ancient Greeks, or is it a universal expression, though language isn't always universal, and..., and...tangent...tangent"

"Farha, the Olympics are from Ancient Greece".

"Yes, Naila... what I meant was contemporary Olympics, you know, including the time when they were held in Nazi Germany or in Vancouver, on occupied Coast Salish territories, etc "

"Where are you going with this?"

"Ok, basically, we want to acknowledge our time spent editing SAWCC's monthly bulletin..."

"...while also expressing excitement about Adithi taking over this role"

"Exactly".

"Okay, so what should our title be?"

[10 seconds of silence]

And so is the story of two fellow organizers and friends who came to appreciate writing the bulletin together. They both have very different writing styles and ways in which they apply sarcasm. One knows how to, the other does not (*cough cough* farha).

It is with these words that they bid Microsoft Publisher "adieu" (It's okay farha we can use this word even though you're an atheist).

They would like to take this opportunity to come out.... And admit to writing the pieces you all love to read in private. They have taken advantage of pseudonyms and *anonymous writer* on a number of occasions. This includes the time when Naila needed to express being sex positive and angry.

On a serious note and to keep this goodbye short and sweet, they appreciate the time they spent working on a feminist publication, with the hope that it would be raw, real and controversial.

And do not worry readers. We're not lost to you forever.

We're still lurking....in the shadows.....

--sunny D and anonymous

CENTRE UPDATE



Centre Hours

Monday & Thursday 9am—9pm

Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday 9am—5pm

The Centre is wheelchair accessible

Le centre est accessible aux fauteuils roulants.

Membership

Have you renewed your membership this year? If not, you can do so by sending the fees to SAWCC.

Volunteers

If you are interested in helping out at the Centre, please contact Homa (Ext. 102 or homa@bellnet.ca) to coordinate a meeting!

VOLUNTEERS!

SAWCC is looking for volunteers to help with **the website** as well as **the library**. For more information please contact the volunteer coordinator Homa at 514-528-8812 Ext. 102 or homa@bellnet.ca

SOUTH ASIAN YOUTH (SAY)/JEUNES SUD-ASIATIQUES (JSA)

La Voie, the Club de Filles and Bollywood Dance groups are going well. We look forward to upcoming weeks with these groups where there are many exciting activities planned! Some of these include painting and video making

Our presence at Vanier college is also about to get exciting as we launch lunchtime essay writing help for students in the Women's Studies Program. Last week members attended a publication launch at the College. A copy of this publication will be available in the library space at SAWCC soon!

This year's Year End Party will be even more jam packed with a soft launch of two zines. Keep an eye out for SAY members at the party. Individual launches of the zines will be held in January, details coming soon.

SAY is currently working on rapport building amongst members and will continue to do so into the coming month with "hangout time". We ended the month with pumpkin carving.

For more information about SAY, our upcoming programming, to inquire about our Basis of Unity, meetings or just to say "hi" feel free to email us at say.jsa@resist.ca

WOMEN'S HERSTORY MONTH– NILAMBRI GHAI



On Oct 26th SAWCC had a special visit from Nilambri Ghai, an ex-president of SAWCC and author of *From Johanne to Janaki: Bringing Vikings to Varanasi*.

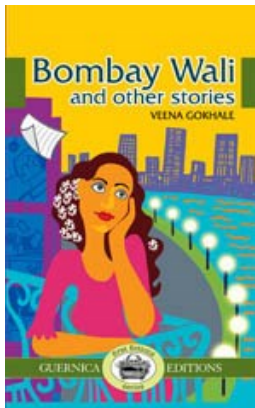
The event was a celebration of Women's herstory month– recognizing the achievements of Women in today's society. The evening passed successively as we sipped tea and discussed Nilambri's book based on the life of a Danish Woman in India.



BOMBAY WALI—A BOOK EVENT

With Author **VEENA GOKHALE**

Shake off the November blues! Join us for a lively reading and discussion with Author Veena Gokhale, presenting her fiction collection *Bombay Wali and other stories* (Guerinca Editions, 2013). Says one reviewer about the book: “While her stories impart a genuine taste and flavour of India familiar to Indophiles, there is a definite departure from tradition in this collection, giving the reader a sense that considerable change is in the air... **“Bombay Wali” is a welcome shift from the traditional portrayal of Indian women.**”



Autographed copies on sale for \$20.00.

Time: 1-3 pm

Date: Saturday, Nov. 30, 2013

Place: SAWCC, 1035 Rachel St. East,
3rd Floor, Ph: 514-528-8812

Tea and Samosas will also be available

Visit <http://www.veenago.com/story> to learn more about the book.

PROTESTING AGAINST THE QUEBEC CHARTER



In the picture: Nighat, Sajida and Dolores hold up the SAWCC banner

On October 6th, three members of SAWCC joined the collectif Québécois contre l'islamophobie (CQCI) in Quebec city to show the center's continued aversion towards the Quebec Charter of rights. After the initial protest in Montreal the collective, bent on making an impression, decided to approach the parliament in Quebec city and SAWCC followed suite. SAWCC strongly feels that the charter is racist, xenophobic and Islamophobic. The oppression of individuals by the Canadian government is something we will not stand for and continue to speak against.

OFFERING YOUR SUPPORT- KURSHID BEGUM AWAN

Khurshid Begum Awan's life is here in Montreal, along side her daughter and grandson. Despite this reality, she was given a deportation order to Pakistan, where she faces the risk of murder. By deporting her husband, Mohamad Khalil Awan, in April 2013, the Canadian government began to divide a family and placed a human being's life in danger. In placing a removal order against her, the government is systematically inciting violence on her, her family and community.



Khurshid Begum Awan came to Canada from Pakistan in 2011, with her husband and grandson Ali. In Lahore, they were targeted by extremist and criminal gangs related to the Sipah E Sahaba, an anti-Shia group that is banned in Pakistan.

In December 2012 Mr. and Mrs. Awan's refugee claim was rejected. In April 2013, Mr. Awan was ordered deported. Since returning to Pakistan he has survived an armed attack, and now lives in hiding.

Shortly after, Mrs. Awan was also ordered deported. It was not until she suffered a heart attack in the Montreal CBSA office on July 4th that the removal procedures against her were finally delayed temporarily.

Mrs. Awan was called into Immigration offices on August 20th. Despite another letter from her doctor as well as a cardiologist, stating that she should not fly before having received adequate treatment, she was given a removal date for the evening of August 21st, 2013.

An Anglican church in Montreal offered to take her in under the tradition of sanctuary to those who are fleeing violence. She now lives in the church, unable to leave. This causes inordinate amounts of daily stress for her, her daughter and her grandson.

Mrs. Awan's current reality – one of basic survival – is caused by systemic exclusion of migrants in Canadian society and violence within Canada's Refugee and Immigration system. More recently, the Canadian government has continued its attack on refugees by implementing the "Refugee Exclusion Act". As immigration laws become increasingly repressive, creating more precarity for refugees and migrants, more people will be forced to go underground and take drastic measures.

To sign a petition supporting Mrs. Awan, please visit: soutienfamilleawan.org

This statement was taken from soutienfamilleawan.org

LETTER: MY HIJAB IS A FORM OF WORSHIP, NOT OPRESSION

I find it amusing how critics of hijab are always saying that it is a symbol of oppression and misogyny. I also find it amusing how those same critics want to “save” or “free” me from said oppression and misogyny, by defining what MY freedom should be.

I am told to take off my hijab if I want a job, an education. Essentially, if I want to be a contributing member of society, I must take off my hijab; if not, I must live a life of isolation, not contributing to society, not adding to it, forever living like a shadow in the confines of my own home.

Is that not oppression?

“We are freeing you,” they say “We are saving you!” they say, “Take off your hijab,” they say, “and we will give you all the freedoms you desire.”

What they are really saying is, “take off the hijab, it makes us uncomfortable.”

“We dislike what (we think) your faith is and the fact that you choose to practice it angers us.”

But, I ask, who are you saving me from? Whom are you freeing me from?

Twelve years ago I chose to wear hijab; just another form of worship. Please do not hijack my worship by calling it a “symbol” and placing your misinformed, uneducated meanings onto it. I am not being ostentatious in my faith, I’m merely practicing it. If you do not want to, you do not have to, that’s called choice. You can feel angry when seeing me in hijab, you can feel uncomfortable, you can even feel annoyed — that’s your choice — but you cannot take away my choice to wear my hijab, because you feel bothered by it.

Telling me, a woman, how to dress. Blocking me, a woman, from a fair chance at a job, from an education — that’s not misogyny?

No, it’s not misogyny when it comes to Muslim women, right?

I’ve been wearing a hijab for the past 12 years, I travel around the world, perform my poetry (my thoughts, ideas, feelings) publicly, work with people from all faiths and backgrounds. I am educated. I wear hijab. But supposedly, I’m oppressed.

I wear hijab and it’s not a big deal. What is a big deal is the fact that people, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, try to force us into making decisions we do not want to make, taking away our freedoms and freedom of choice. Whether someone is forcing you to wear hijab or forcing you to take it off, they are essentially doing the same thing. They are taking away your freedom!

As a Muslim woman — as a woman — I am fed up with people, men and women, telling me how to act, telling me how to look.

Thank you, but no thank you, Quebec. I do not need a savior, I’m doing great on my own! What I do need is to save myself from you!

-Sofia Baig



This passage was written as a blog post by Sofia Baig and was taken from <http://worldobserveronline.com/2013/10/07/letter-hijab-form-worship-oppression/>

IDENTITY CRISIS

In my years of working with adolescents and teens in great distress, I had the chance to be a part of their quest for a new identity. I could help them as they searched for individualism in their transition to adulthood. Working with the South Asian women and their families from January 2013, gives me the same taste. Most of the cases referred to me at SAWCC deal with similar issues of identity. Thus, I decided to write about these issues by telling you a story.

This is the story of Rani. Rani is a 28 year old girl from South Asia who saw her parents and sibling killed in front of her eyes by a militant tanker. Although she harbours a lot of post-traumatic stress disorder, Rani is thankful to God that she is still alive and believes that there is a reason for her being alive. She is accepted as a refugee by the Canadian Government and decides to settle in Montreal. The community workers at SAWCC extend their support to Rani and she gets registered to receive social welfare and health care. Rani now learns to live by herself and tries to integrate into Canadian society. She learns to dress for the weather, enrolls herself for the language classes at SAWCC, uses the public transport system and tries her best to assimilate into this society. Although she is striving to make this change, a constant battle within Rani still exists. Am I Canadian or am I South Asian?

Dr. Salman Akthar, renowned author and Professor of Psychiatry and Human Behaviour at Jefferson Medical College calls the process of immigration “a third individuation”. The immigration process is comparable to the rebirth of a Phoenix. According to Greek mythology, when the Phoenix has lived for 500 years, he builds a nest at the top of a palm-tree, places himself in the nest and burns in his nest. Dr. Cecile Rousseau, professeure titulaire/ division de psychiatrie sociale et culturelle, Université McGill compares this immigration process to the Phoenix. Like the Phoenix, the immigrant burns or loses everything of his parent country and grows as a new Phoenix from these ashes in the new country. There is a process of renaissance or personal transformation of the immigrant. This transformation process is smooth for some, while it becomes cause for anxiety for others. Rani tries several approaches to answer this question and put an end to her conflict. Am I Canadian or South Asian? Ten years later, Rani calls herself a *Canadian South Asian*. Over the next few issues of the bulletin I would like to explore how she became comfortable calling herself a Canadian South Asian. I would like to tell you Rani’s story.

For more information on this article contact

Radhika Sundar

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Volunteer family therapist at SAWCC*

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Characters mentioned in this article are fictional and any resemblance to actual events or locales or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental.



South Asian Women: Autonomous & Independent's
Le projet «Les Femmes Sud-Asiatiques: Autonomes et Indépendantes»
présente
Exhibition on the theme of Gender Equality
une exposition sur le thème de l'égalité des sexes



The South Asian Women's Community Centre would like to invite you to our Exhibition on the subject of Gender Equality. We are celebrating the success of our project "South Asian Women: Autonomous & Independent" and the women who participate in our programs.

Le Centre Communautaire des Femmes Sud-Asiatiques aimerait vous inviter à notre exposition sur le thème de l'égalité des sexes. Nous célébrons le succès de notre projet "Les Femmes Sud-Asiatiques: Autonome et Indépendant" et les femmes qui participent à nos programmes.

Your presence would encourage and support our participants

Votre présence serait d'encourager et de soutenir nos participants

When: Friday the 22nd of November, 2013, between
10:00 am -1:00 pm

Where: 419 St. Roch, in the main entrance hall

**For further information contact Juvaria
at 514-528-8812/ 105**

Centre Communautaire des femmes sud-asiatiques

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31 years of sisterhood, strength, struggle and success 1981-2013

www.sawcc-ccfsa.ca

Nov 5—Information session on Co-operative Housing
Nov 8—SAY meeting 530PM
Nov 12—Jewellery Making Activity
Nov 19—Information session on Family Law
Nov 15—Diwali Party
Nov 21—Executive Council meeting 630PM
Nov 22—Autonomous and Independent Exhibition on Gender Equality 10AM-1PM
Nov 26—Recipe Exchange
Nov 30—Bombay Wali—Book Event

Le 5 nov—Session d'information sur l'habitation coopérative
Le 8 nov—Réunion du collectif des Jeunes sud-asiatiques (JSA) 5h30
Le 12 nov—Fabrication de bijoux
Le 19 nov—Session d'information, sujet sur le droit de la famille
Le 15 nov—Fête de Diwali
Le 21 nov—Réunion du conseil administratif à 18h30
Le 22 nov—Autonomes et Indépendantes - une exposition sur le thème de l'égalité des sexes 10H-13H
Le 26 nov—L'échange de recettes
Le 30 nov—Bombay Wali

NOVEMBER 2013

| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
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