



# Centre Communautaire des Femmes Sud-Asiatiques

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## What do you think? Que pensez-vous?

- Let us know your thoughts about the new bulletin
- Que pensez-vous à notre nouveau bulletin?
- We encourage you to send in your stories and articles for upcoming newsletters in any language!
- Please write to Shipra at [shipra@bellnet.ca](mailto:shipra@bellnet.ca)
- Soumettez vos pensées et œuvres écrites à Shipra

## International Women's Day 2012 (By Farha Najah)

SAWCC is a part of the March 8<sup>th</sup> Coordination and Action Committee – Women of Diverse Diverse Origins. The committee organised a forum on March 4<sup>th</sup> entitled, “Women Resist Canadian Mining Exploitation” so as to discuss women's crucial role in resisting a surge of mining and development aggression taking place in Canada and around the world, led by Canadian corporations. The event was held in Côte des Neiges. About 180 people participated throughout the day to listen to speeches, watch short films, participate in discussion groups, and watch cultural performances.

SAY members were present during the conference and some read out a cultural piece, highlighting the role of young women/feminist in the context of social justice activism. For a copy of the piece, please contact: [sawccyouth@gmail.com](mailto:sawccyouth@gmail.com).

Despite pouring rain, over 500 women came out in response to the call by

Women of Diverse Origins for the International Women's Day demonstration on March 8. Striking students (with helicopters and mounted police in their wake) joined in, as did participants from anti-Israeli apartheid week as the crowd marched down St-Catherine Street, in the middle of downtown Montreal.

More info: <https://wdofdo.wordpress.com/>



## Welcome to New Centre Manager and Coordinator!

The South Asian Women's Community Centre has been running strong for 30 wonderful years. At this landmark anniversary, SAWCC is turning the page toward a new chapter, with new leadership.

C'est avec grand plaisir que nous vous présentons officiellement deux femmes, Ghazala Munawar et

Ramani Balendra, qui ont été parmi nous pendant plusieurs années et qui prennent, entre elles, deux postes important dans l'organisme. Ghazala, une travailleuse communautaire qui s'engage avec les clients qui parlent hindi/urdu/punjabi a pris le poste de la gérante du centre dès le 2 avril. Ramani, une travailleuse communautaire depuis 1990 qui s'engage à travailler avec

la communauté sri-lankaise de Montréal, a pris le poste de la coordonnatrice du centre à la même date.

We welcome them to their new positions with open arms and wish them all the best in their new endeavours. We know they will lead us to new and exciting places and are all very excited to embark on this journey with them.

## What you need to know about **BILL C-31** (By Swathi Sekhar)

In February 2012 the Conservative government introduced **Bill C-31** to reform existing immigration and refugee laws. It is very important to stay informed and be aware of these changes. Some of the main provisions include:

- Giving the Minister sweeping powers to designate "safe countries" from which refugee claims will be fast-tracked **without the option to appeal**, and unlikely to succeed.
- If a refugee's country of origin is deemed to be "safe", the government has the authority to **revoke the refugee status** of these individuals. These refugees will have their permanent residence status revoked, and subsequently be **removed from Canada**.
- Authorizing **mandatory, unreviewable detention** for a **minimum of one year** of refugee claimants who are deemed to have arrived "irregularly". This may also include the detention of children.
- If claimants are deemed to have arrived "irregularly" Bill C-31 further prohibits these claimants from applying for permanent residence or sponsoring family members for **5 years** if they are eventually successful in their refugee claims.

- The new bill seeks to streamline procedures even further, to allow quicker removals of people whose claims have been rejected.

Individuals and organizations such as SAWCC will most certainly feel the impact of these changes in the months and years to come. To find out how these changes might affect you or your loved ones, please talk to a community worker at SAWCC.



## South Asian Youth (SAY) / Jeunes sud-asiatiques (JSA)

Our March film screening featured "Survival, Strength, and Sisterhood – Power of Women in DTES". The movie highlighted '20 years of history of the annual women's memorial march for missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Vancouver, Coast Salish Territories'. While the movie did not go into depth on many of the issues surrounding missing and murdered Indigenous women, it celebrated the individual stories of amazing women who are members of a community much misunderstood in Downtown East Side. Please see the insert for details of our upcoming April movie screening, "Pariah" on April 29<sup>th</sup> at 1:00pm.

Le Club de Filles à l'École La Voie a fini notre projet de vidéo avec Fondation filles d'action. Les filles ont planifié et filmé une pièce de théâtre à propos d'une vole de collier, et comment

elles ont résolu la situation. Félicitation à votre réalisation!

JSA a aussi collaboré avec les animateurs chez Jeunesse Unie au Parc-Extension ce mois. Nous avons organisé une soirée de discussion avec les jeunes qui fréquentent la maison jeunes. Le thème de la soirée était « sexisme dans les médias ». C'était une discussion vraiment intensive et éducative. Nous avons eu des perspectives différentes, et engagés dans les débats intéressants.

En avril, nous aurons des ateliers à propos des relations égalitaires et saines aux participants de Blue Print (une collaboration avec Centre 2110) et Zoom (organisé par Fondation filles d'action). Veuillez vérifier les activités dans le calendrier.

## Remembering Madeleine Parent...

**Madeleine Parent**, a long time supporter, active member of SAWCC community, recently passed away in Montreal on March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2012 at the age of 93.

Née à Montréal en 1918, elle a mené une vie extrêmement active, au Québec et en Ontario, en tant que militante syndicale, féministe, pacifiste et humaniste.

Madeleine était une de ces personnes comme on en rencontre peu dans une vie: une femme impressionnante qui par son action a changé le cours de notre histoire! Elle a lutté pour le droit à l'avortement, pour l'équité salariale et pour la défense des droits des femmes immigrantes and des femmes autochtones. Elle a tissé des liens d'engagement et d'amitié auprès de nombreux organismes communautaires.



## 10<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE GUJARAT GENOCIDE (courtesy of Dolores Chew)

On 27 February 2002, a train carrying *kar sevaks* (community volunteers, now often used for 'Hindu' religious volunteers) in the western Indian state of Gujarat (Gandhi's birthplace) caught fire and burned. Fifty-seven people died. There are contradictory versions of how the fire started – from within the train or set from outside. Yet the following day and for two weeks after, mobs armed with weapons, gasoline and gas cylinders, roamed the streets of Gujarat killing and murdering Muslims very brutally and in cold blood. Women and girls were particularly targeted – raped, gang-raped and burned alive. Pregnant women had foetuses ripped from their wombs. And the world has not heard much about this. The genocide is the result of Hindu nationalist mobilization in the service of making India 'Hindutva' or a Hindu nation. The identification of 'Muslims' with 'terrorism' in India and many parts of the world, has made the struggle of justice more challenging.

The ostensible cause of the massacre was that the train had been

torched by Muslims. **But how did the killings happen so quickly and in such an organized fashion?** All the evidence pointed to pre-planning and collusion by agents of the government and the state. Muslims were identified through the use of voter lists, Muslim businesses were systematically torched, a Hindu woman who had married a Muslim man was killed, gas cylinders and gasoline (which are very difficult to come by in bulk quantities) were in plentiful supply, there was almost a total lack of intervention by police and firefighters.

**At least 2,000 people were killed and many are missing.** The survivors were sheltered in makeshift refugee camps. Even here the government was hardly visible, the camps being hastily put together by Muslim charitable organizations. The police were slow in coming to take down first information reports (FIRs), and there were no doctors on hand to examine raped women. Many local and international organizations (Citizens Initiative, Human Rights Watch) published reports in the immediate aftermath.

Massive amounts of written, oral and visual documentation have been collected and many detailed reports are available. Reports have been updated during the decade. **All the evidence points to state collusion and official inaction.**

The Gujarat killing is genocide because all the evidence shows that the carnage and the build-up to it were -- acts "committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group" [1948 Convention on Genocide] Campaigns of hate, economic boycotts, employment boycotts, re-writing of school textbooks and demonizing of Muslims pre-dated the massacre. These activities happened at the instance of political parties (the BJP) and allied organizations – militias, youth, etc.

At SAWCC we launched "JUSTICE FOR THE VICTIMS OF THE GUJARAT GENOCIDE", (including a postcard campaign directed to Canadian prime ministers and external affairs ministers) was launched to break the silence and advocate for justice for the victims. (continued on pg. 6)

## Healthy Eating / Manger santé— Stuffed Mushroom Hors d'oeuvres

### Ingredients:

15 medium sized mushrooms  
 ¼ cup strong cheese (cheddar works well)  
 ¼ low fat cream cheese  
 2 tbs chopped walnuts  
 1 jalapeño pepper (chopped finely)  
 Ground black pepper to taste

### Directions:









Remove the stems off each mushroom, you can use these in a stir fry or discard them. In a bowl, mix together the cheeses, nuts and pepper until smooth and creamy. Spoon filling into each mushroom top. Bake on 350F for 15-20 mins. Cool and garnish with shallots.

Mushrooms provide us with good-for-us selenium, they produce Vitamin D when exposed to sunlight; they're low calorie, a source of iron and they taste great!

Happy eating!



# April 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	 3	4	5	 6 Centre closed	7
8	 9 Centre closed	 10	 11	12	 13	14
15	16	17	18	 19	 20	21
22	23	24	25	26	 27	28
 29	30					

## Calendar events / Les événements de calendrier

- April 3 - Blue Print SAY workshop "Teen Dating Violence" at 2110 Centre (1500 de Maisonneuve, Suite 404) 6-8PM
- April 4 - Refugee Rights Day
- April 10—Info session on placement agents presented by Immigrant Workers Centre
- April 11—Language classes begin
- April 13—SAY meeting
- April 19 - SAY workshop "Teen Dating Violence" at Girls Action Zoom event (Centre Saint-Pierre 1212 Panet, métro Beaudry)
- April 20 - Executive Committee meeting at 6PM - everyone is welcome!
- April 27 - SAWCC Potluck lunch at 12PM
- April 29 - SAY Film screening "Pariah" (2011) at 1PM at SAWCC

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- 3 avr - Atelier pour Projet Blue Print au Centre 2110 (1500 de Maisonneuve, Suite 404) 18-20h
- 4 avr - Journée des droits des réfugiés
- 10 avr—Session d'information des agents de placement, présenté par le Centre des travailleurs et travailleuses immigrants
- 11 avr—Cours de langues commencent
- 13 avr - Réunion de Jeunes Sud-Asiatique (JSA) à 15h30
- 19 avr - Atelier sur La violence dans les relations amoureux avec Fondation Filles D'Action (Centre Saint-Pierre 1212 Panet, métro Beaudry)
- 20 avr - Réunion du conseil de direction à 18h00: toutes sont bienvenues!
- 27 avr - Rejoignez-vous à notre dîner communautaire mensuel à 12h00
- 29 avr - JSA projection de film mensuel commence à 13h00

## Member's Corner

It is with sadness that we share the news that on Monday 2nd April, **Charles Adam**, husband of SAWCC founding member, Jennifer Chew and father to SAWCC member Samantha Chew-Quinn and Shiraz and Vishnu Adam, passed away. Charles was a feminist and an ardent supporter of SAWCC and SAWCC causes and issues.

Visitation will take place on **Wednesday 11th April from 6—9 pm at Residences Funeraires Collins Clarke MacGillivray White**, 5610 Sherbrooke West (corner Marcil; metro vendome & bus # 105)

The funeral will take place on **Thursday 12th April at 11:30 fol-**

lowed by burial and then reception (for details consult *The Gazette*)

Our hearts and deepest condolences go out to Charles' entire family. You are in our thoughts during this difficult time.

**Sadeqa Siddiqui**, who has been a pillar in the SAWCC community for the last 28 years, retired from SAWCC as of April 1. Over her many years of dedicated service, she led us with a wealth of knowledge in community work and building, family violence, feminist activism, and integration for newcomers with uncompromising strength and wisdom. She has represented SAWCC at local, provincial, national, and international levels. We celebrated her years of work and

contributions in a group lunch over the weekend. Sadeqa, thank you for all you have done for your immense and indescribable contribution the community and congratulation on your retirement, you will be dearly missed!

Also congratulations to **Deleena Theva**, who will begin to pursue her studies in Business Management. Deleena has been involved in the Autonomous & Independent Women project for the past a year and half, helping women such as translation in Tamil in Parc-Extension and Côte-des-neiges. We wish you best of luck in your studies!



### Membership: April 2012—March 2013

You would like to:

- Become a new member  
 Renew your membership

Country of origin: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of years in Canada: \_\_\_\_\_

Female: \_\_\_ Male: \_\_\_

#### Membership fees:

- \$15.00 for salaried people  
 \$7.00 for non-salaried people & elders  
 \$100.00 for life-time membership  
 Donation

\$\$ Total: \_\_\_\_\_

I am interested in:

- Language classes  
 Potluck lunches  
 Income-generating co-op  
 Information sessions  
 Movie nights

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

\* Please return this form via mail, fax, or in-person before April 1, 2012

\* Please contact Ghazala at x104 or mghazala@bellnet.ca if you have any question.

### South asian women's Community centre

South Asian Women's Community  
 Centre  
 Centre Communautaire des femmes  
 sud-asiatiques  
 1035, rue Rachel est, 3ième étage.

Phone: 514-528-8812  
 Fax: 514-528-0896  
 E-mail: sawcc@bellnet.ca

### SAW Catering Group

**South Asian  
 Women cooking:  
 healthy and delicious  
 meals for  
 your home  
 and parties at very reasonable prices**



To order, or for menu or more info, please contact Juvaria at  
[juvariay@hotmail.com](mailto:juvariay@hotmail.com)

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1035, rue Rachel est, 3ième étage.  
Montréal, QC H2J 2J5

Phone: 514-528-8812  
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E-mail: sawcc@bellnet.ca

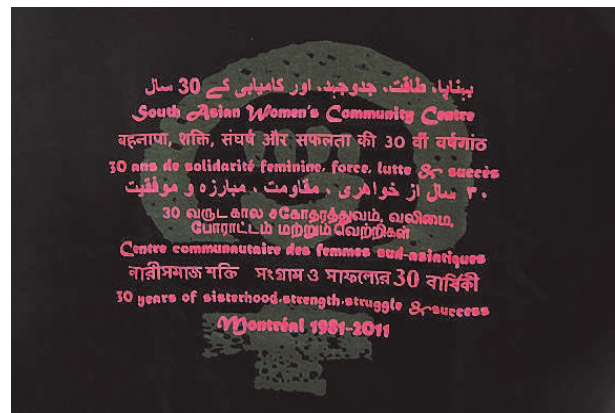
30 years of sisterhood, strength, struggle and success 1981-2011

[www.sawcc-ccfsa.ca](http://www.sawcc-ccfsa.ca)

*The South Asian Women's Community Centre is a not-for-profit organization that helps women achieve their full potential in the Québec and Canadian societies and also helps them become independent.*

### Announcements / Annonces:

- **Membership 2012-2013: Please renew your membership or begin a new one by returning the form on pg. 5**
- **Volunteers:** If you are interested in helping out at the Centre, please contact Homa (ex. 102 or homa@bellnet.ca) for a meeting so we can get to know your skills better!
- **SAWCC t-shirt and bags are on-sale at the Centre (10\$ ea.)!!**



(SAWCC gear writing on bags and t-shirts)  
On sale now!!!

## 10<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE GUJARAT GENOCIDE (cont'd from pg 3)

10 years later the quest for justice is still continuing. The Chief Minister of Gujarat state at the time, Narendra Modi (of the BJP party) in a very strong campaign in which the victimized community were painted as the victimizers, utilized the genocide to win massive support in state elections which he won with a huge majority. He has denied complicity in the genocide despite testimony by credible witnesses to the contrary -- that he was directly involved in organizing the genocide as well as preventing police from intervening. Attempts by victims to get justice through the court system has faced all kinds of hurdles, from witness intimidation to biased prosecutors; mass arrests of Muslim men. In some cases the Supreme Court of India ordered trials to

be taken out of the state. Meanwhile Narendra Modi has built up very successful relationships for Gujarat with Indian (Tata, Ambani) corporate and continues to woo international business. He has become the darling of non-resident Indians, represented in Canada by organizations such as the Canadian Friends of Gujarat, Canada India Foundation and Indo-Canadian Peace Alliance. The Harper government set up a trade mission in Gujarat. Senator Di Nino and MP Patrick Brown, Chair, Canada India Interparliamentary Association visited Gujarat to attend the 4th Annual Vibrant Gujarat Global Investors Summit (2009), when they met Narendra Modi.

Some of the most tenacious legal battles for justice have been filed

and pursued by women victims of the genocide. Zaheera Sheikh, very courageously fought for justice for her family and other – 14 were burned to death in their bakery. Unfortunately she succumbed to witness intimidation and has been expelled by the Majlis-e-Shura, an apex decision making body of Muslims in India. Bilqis Bano whose child was bashed to death in front of her, then raped and left for dead won her legal battle. And Zakir Jaffri, the widow of a very brave individual who sacrificed himself so other could live continues, despite her age and the legal hurdles that are constantly thrown up before her, with her quest for justice. Among those named in her case are Narendra Modi.