

## INVESTING IN WOMEN'S EQUALITY...

West Coast LEAF is grateful for the ongoing support we receive from our donors, members and the Law Foundation of British Columbia. We also receive project support from our public funders. Thank you to Ethical Bean for kindly supplying our office with coffee and tea.



West Coast LEAF is especially grateful to Coast Capital Savings for recently supporting our public legal education programs on Vancouver Island and for funding an organizational development project.

## LEGACY GIVING

Leaving a Legacy Gift to West Coast LEAF transforms the lives of women for future generations.

Legacy Gifts can be made now or for the future – there are options that allow you to benefit both yourself and a charity now and options that allow you to provide a lasting gift in your will.

West Coast LEAF strongly encourages you to seek professional legal, estate planning and financial advice before deciding on a course of action.

For more information about planned giving, please contact West Coast LEAF at [development@westcoastleaf.org](mailto:development@westcoastleaf.org).

*"It's win-win for everybody. It feels good to leave a legacy. A lot of people have worked hard all their lives and this is an incredible opportunity to make a big difference. You can make an enormous difference to a small organization."*

**Nicole Garton-Jones, principal of Heritage Law**

## WEST COAST LEAF JOINS IMAGINE CANADA ETHICAL CODE



West Coast LEAF believes that transparency and accountability to our donors and funders are essential to our success. With this in mind, we have recently joined Imagine Canada's Ethical Fundraising Code Program. By adhering to this Code, we are complying with generally accepted practices for managing donations. West Coast LEAF must follow a detailed protocol and indicate its compliance annually in order to use the Ethical Code logo. West Coast LEAF Executive Director Alison Brewin was recently appointed to the National Advisory Council of Imagine Canada.

If you have any questions about our adherence to the Ethical Code, please feel free to contact West Coast LEAF at 604-684-8772 or visit our website. You can also download the Ethical Code itself by going to [www.imaginecanada.ca](http://www.imaginecanada.ca).

## Themis Club Monthly Donors

Alice Albert, Milnor Alexander, Donna Anthony, Megan Ashbury, Andrew Atkins, Mary Atkins, Ellen Balka, Christine Basque, Renate Battaglio, Kathryn Berge, Jessica Beverley, Pam Bhatti, Sharon Blaker, Carolyn Bouck, Chris Bowers, Gwen Boyd, Susan Boyd, Anita Braha, Alison Brewin, Gretchen Brewin, Barbara Britton, Karey Brooks, Linda Brotherston, Tracey Brown, Trudi Brown, Georgina Brunette, Melina Buckley, Beverley Burns, Lee Campbell, Patricia Cochran, Jennifer Conkie, Faye Cooper, Lynn Copeland, Rosalind Currie, Kirstin Danielson, Cheryl Davies, Anne Davis, Maneesha Deckha, Bridget Dentoom, Pat Dewhirst, Mary Doherty, Elizabeth Dunn, Brenda Edwards, Avigail Eisenberg, Makhbuba Ergasheva, Catherine Evans, Darlene Facchin, Irene Faulkner, Aesha Faux, Joan Feyrer, Kerry-Lynne Findlay, Amy Francis, Karen Frederickson, Beverly Gallagher, Rachel Gallo, Lauren Gehlen, Crissy George, Marla Gilsig, Maria Gomes, Frances Gordon, Dawn Green, Lucy Greene, Katey Grist, Anna Helmer, Audrey Johnson, Jennifer Johnstone, April Katz, Sheila Keet, Rose Keith, Phyllis Kenney, K.M. Kent, Karen Kilbride, Joy Korman, Natasha Krotez, Sandra Krotez, Rosanne Kyle, Roselyne Lambert, Gudrun Langolf, Judith Lee, Allison Lepp, Nicole Liddell, Linda Light, Heather MacFadgen, Ron MacIsaac, Signy Madden, Ritu Mahil, Francesca Marzari, Carol Matthews, Neilane Mayhew, Cherlyn McKay, Maris McMillan, Kay Melbye, Jennifer Millbank, Virginia Miller, Leslie Muir, Barbara Nelson, Jan O'Brien, Niveria Oliveira, Margaret Ostrowski, Lara Percy, Monique Pongracic-Speier, Nerys Poole, Susan Powell, Ramona Reynolds, Shirley Ridalls, Jillian Ridington, Dominique Roelants, Andrea Rolls, Mary Salaysay, Sheila Schierbezak, Ruth Simkin, Kerry Simmons, Michelle Simpson, Mary Woo Sims, Miriam Sobrino, Martin Spencer, Eloise Spitzer, Theresa Stowe, Veronica Strong-Boag, Jane Templeman, Janine Thomas, Petra Vanderley, Art Vertlieb, Elizabeth Vogt, Duff Waddell, Lindsay Waddell, Sheryl Wagner, Kim Hart Wensley, Janice Westlund, Kenneth Williams, Wendy Williams, Val Wilson, Allison Wolf, Fiona York, Anita Zaenker

## JOIN THE THEMIS MONTHLY GIVING CLUB!

Monthly Giving is the best way to support West Coast LEAF. It provides sustainable revenue, reduces administrative costs, and helps us plan for the future. Please call Fiona York at 604.684.8772 ext. 113 for more details.

**West Coast LEAF**  
555 - 409 Granville Street,  
Vancouver, BC V6C 1T2

T: 604.684.8772  
T: 1.866.737.7716  
F: 604.684.1543

[www.westcoastleaf.org](http://www.westcoastleaf.org)  
[info@westcoastleaf.org](mailto:info@westcoastleaf.org)



## LEAFlet

*Newsletter of the Women's Legal Education & Action Fund, BC branch*

Dec 2008 Vol. 21 No. 4

## Equality Breakfast 2009

March 13, 2009

Speaker: Mary Walsh of This Hour Has 22 Minutes  
Hosted by the CBC's Gloria Macarenko



## DISTINGUISHED CANADIAN TO BE KEYNOTE SPEAKER AT EQUALITY BREAKFAST

West Coast LEAF is honoured to have Canadian icon Mary Walsh as the keynote speaker at our 22nd annual Equality Breakfast on March 13, 2009. Known to Canadians as a comedian, actor, writer and director, the multi-talented Mary Walsh is also a social justice advocate, supporting organizations such as the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB), Pride Toronto and Oxfam. She participated in Oxfam-Canada's fact-finding mission to Ethiopia in 1994 and later that year addressed the United Nations Global Conference on Development. She supported Oxfam-Canada's sanitation, education and health care "For All" campaign. Most recently, she spoke at a Coalition rally in downtown Toronto.

Mary was born in St. John's, Newfoundland, the seventh of eight children. Facing adversity at the onset of her young life, Mary contracted pneumonia at eight months old and was tested with numerous subsequent challenges.

Mary overcame all adversity and ultimately became one of Canada's most well-known comedians. First starting as a replacement radio announcer for the CBC, she later joined the Newfoundland Travelling Theatre Company (NTTC), which would prove to be an important stepping stone. NTTC's production of *Cod on a Stick* gained so much recognition that CBC brought the play to Newfoundland radio in 1974. Mary and her NTTC partners then named their company Codco (for Cod Company) and toured the play around Newfoundland and Labrador.

By 1979, Mary made her TV debut starring in the CBC mini-series *Up at Ours*, set in her hometown of St. John's. In 1992, after her time with Codco, Mary starred in the now famous TV comedy series *This Hour has 22 Minutes*. It was during this time that her most creative talents were publicized, as she impressed Canadian viewers with her in-your-face personality and satirical commentary on politics and society. "I've always respected Mary... She's outspoken and she stands up for the people," says New Brunswick MLA Greg Byrne.

In November Mary Walsh was recognized with an honorary degree from McGill University. During her speech, she commented on the level of participation of women in Canadian politics. Although women represent more than 50 per cent of the population, only about 30 per cent of cabinet ministers are female. "Women don't really want to be in politics (because) it's so hard to keep the makeup on both faces," she said (Peter Rakobowchuk, The Canadian Press).

Never one to muffle her own opinions, Mary will bring with her a wealth of knowledge, experience, and rambunctious political wit when she speaks at the much anticipated Equality Breakfast. She will be commenting on the current status of women in Canada, including issues such as pay equity, gender roles and the balance of women in politics. We are thrilled to have her as our honorary guest and hope you will join us too!



## REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ALISON BREWIN

Happy holidays everyone. This past year has been a very busy one for West Coast LEAF staff with the *Rick v Brandsema* case, Women's Equality and Religious Freedom project, transformation of our materials and communication plans, and so much more.

This fall we also had a round of staff changes. In September we welcomed our new Office Coordinator, **Mahbuba (Mary) Ergasheva**. Mahbuba brings a profound depth of experience and commitment to the work of West Coast LEAF. In her country of origin, Uzbekistan, she was the Director of the Women's Leadership Centre and played a huge role in supporting the involvement of women in the transitions that took place in former Soviet countries.

**Sara Gortari** has joined the Development team here in the role of Fundraising Assistant. She will be working closely with Director of Development and Communications Fiona York and myself in coordinating the Equality Breakfast and coordinating our donor communications. Sara worked at the Canadian Cancer Society in a similar role, but combined her interest in fundraising with a Women's Studies degree – what a great fit for us!

**Kasari Govender** takes on the Legal Director role after three years of practicing constitutional and human rights law with the firm of Mary Eberts. She brings a huge breadth of knowledge in the legal areas that are central to West Coast LEAF's work, and a strategic mind that will be a great asset to the future of our success.

We are so honoured to have all three women be a part of this organization. It is inspiring to have such accomplished people make the choice to contribute their skills to this work.

Speaking of inspiring women - we are saying good-bye to **Zara Suleman** as our Family Law Project Director. Not surprisingly, Zara is taking up the continuous call for her to practice family law. She will be joining Patricia Bond at North Shore Law LLP. In her short contract with us (a year and a half), Zara has transformed both West Coast LEAF and public dialogue on family law and its systemic implications for women. We know she will continue to be that voice in her new role, and we look forward to her continued involvement in West Coast LEAF's work in the area.

## THE VICTORIA PERSONS DAY



The Victoria Persons Day Breakfast took place on Wednesday, October 15, 2008. The guest speaker was Beverley Jacobs, president of the Native Women's Association of Canada. Beverley Jacobs was honoured with a Governor General's Awards in Commemoration of the Persons Case on November 4, 2008.

## VOLUNTEER PROFILE

### Pam Bhatti



Pam Bhatti began her volunteer career with West Coast LEAF in 2000 when she was a summer legal research student. She created West Coast LEAF's very first website and has been with West Coast LEAF ever since as

a member of the Public Legal Education Committee. Since that time, the website has gone through many updates and has been one of the PLE Committee's major projects.

Pam attended Queen's University with an entrance scholarship and received her Bachelor of Laws in 2002. She articulated with Davis and Company and since 2004 has pursued her passion for criminal law as a prosecutor with the Provincial Court.

Pam has been a West Coast LEAF board member for three years, during which time she has also been the Chair of the PLE Committee. Most recently, she is mother to an adorable four month old baby boy.

## THE POSITIVE DUTY TO DISCLOSE

On October 14th, West Coast LEAF counsel Nitya Iyer intervened at the Supreme Court of Canada in the case *Rick v Brandsema*.

Nitya's presentation to the Supreme Court justices summarized four key points. Each underlines the positive duty for disclosure of financial information relating to family assets by the parties in a separation agreement. She stressed that addressing each of the four points described would help achieve finality in a separation agreement, and also suggested that failure to comply with this positive duty is a reason to set aside an agreement.

The four points outlined were as follows:

1. The duty to disclose arises from the very nature of the marriage relationship, which is the economic partnership of two equals.
2. The duty to disclose creates a necessary deterrent to the persistent use of disclosure as a tactic in settlement negotiations.

3. The duty to disclose alleviates the systemic economic disadvantage women face relative to men on marriage breakdown. This effect is so well-known as to be worthy of judicial notice.

4. The duty to disclose promotes the Charter value of substantive sex equality (S.15. (1) *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*).

## CLOSET ADDICTION

Closet Addiction, described as a designer fashion resale boutique, is supporting West Coast LEAF with a portion of net proceeds from selected items.

Owner Kara Forrest has an educational background in Japanese Studies, English Lit, French and Paralegal Studies. She also completed an entrepreneurial program at Douglas College.

Kara describes her inspiration for the store as, "something which comes from the heart, almost instinctual. Fashion was a hobby while I was working as a litigation paralegal at Harris Brun and teaching the legal assistant program at Sprott-Shaw College. Quite a departure from the more serious weekday legal work, I would scour thrift stores on weekends for hidden gems. Creating Closet Addiction was just a matter of simply trusting in abilities I believed I had, and then actually making that leap."

"West Coast LEAF seemed such a perfect fit! West Coast LEAF's work represents issues that are easy to feel passionate about, and I'm proud to be able to support them in any small way, especially given my personal previous career connection to the field of litigation. The reactions of customers and consignors to the boutique's supporting West Coast LEAF have been extremely positive."

Her advice to other small business owners? "While circumstances and events can be beyond our control, we have the power to take the step, every day, toward being the kind of business which offers excellent value and service to its customers. I'd also suggest that supporting other women in business is key. If you can use the services of a local business woman over those of an American big-box chain, then that is the socially responsible choice to make."

Visit [closetaddictionboutique.com](http://closetaddictionboutique.com) or 2231 Clarke Street, Port Moody.



Photo, left to right: Miriam Maisonville, Rosanne Kyle, Marina Pratchett, QC, Alison Murray, Maria Morellato, QC, Anne Chopra and Linda Robertson.

The first ever Women Lawyers Forum Award of Excellence organized by the Women Lawyers Forum of the Canadian Bar Association took place on October 29, 2008. The award recognizes exceptional woman lawyers who take risks, foster change and open doors for other women. West Coast LEAF board member Rosanne Kyle was nominated for an award. Also nominated were: Maria Morellato, QC, Blake, Cassels & Graydon LLP; Alison Murray, Murray Jamieson; Margaret Ostrowski, QC, Immigration & Refugee Board; Susan Paish, QC, Pharmasave Drugs (National) Ltd., CEO; and Marina Pratchett, QC, Fasken Martineau DuMoulin LLP. The award was presented to Maria Morellato in recognition of her many distinguished career achievements and outstanding contributions to women in the legal profession.

## EDUCATION PROGRAMS ON THE GO!

West Coast LEAF has set the ambitious goal of offering our educational programs to several Vancouver Island communities in the next year. Education Manager Deanna Ogle has been working with Signy Madden, West Coast LEAF Board Member and Nanaimo resident, on building connections with local organizations in Nanaimo.

They have met with several community groups in Nanaimo to discuss current youth programming in the area as well as gaps and opportunities for future education programming.

In No Means No, young adults educate students about their legal responsibilities and rights with respect to consent and sexual assault. Youth in the Workplace is focused on engaging youth in learning their rights and responsibilities in the workplace. One of the unique features of West Coast LEAF's youth programs is that these comprehensive and interactive workshops are delivered by specially trained youth mentors ages 18 to 24.

One of the key issues that has been raised both by youth and individuals working with youth is the need for all of us to know and understand our rights and responsibilities. Educating youth on their rights and responsibilities in the workplace and in intimate relationships is a key step in addressing historical inequalities and affecting systemic change.