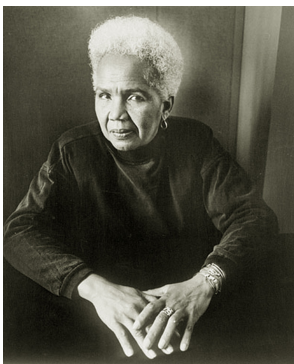



# LEAFlet

PROVOCATIVE • OPINIONATED • PERSUASIVE



BARBARA WOODLEY PHOTO

**THANK YOU** for nominating us for the 2014 Rosemary Brown Award for Women / page 4

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555-409 Granville Street  
Vancouver, BC V6C 1T2  
t: 604-684-8772  
t: 1-866-737-7716  
e: info@westcoastleaf.org

[westcoastleaf.org](http://westcoastleaf.org)

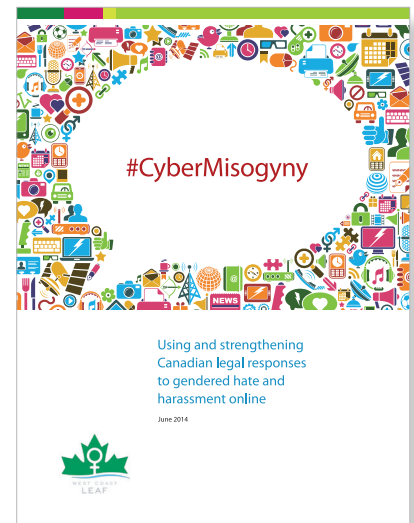
## TAKING A STAND AGAINST CYBER MISOGYNY

Two months after attending a house party, a 16-year old girl was shocked to find images and a video of herself on the Internet being raped while unconscious. Astoundingly, her peers then started mocking her assault by taking photos of themselves lying in the same position she was in and posting them online with the hashtag #jadapose.

We heard about Jada's story shortly after releasing West Coast LEAF's newest report examining revenge porn, non-consensual sharing of intimate images among youth, child sexual exploitation, cyberstalking, and gender-based hate speech online. It brought home for us just how timely and important our 35 recommendations to address the online safety and equality of women and girls really are.

We urge the government to tackle online harassment and gender-based hate speech by passing legislation specifically targeting this kind of behaviour. We're demanding real accountability for online stalkers and abusers. We also want to see a ban on some of the tools they use to perpetuate their abuse — computer keyloggers and "stalking apps," for example. The report urges the BC government to grant victims of sexualized cyber misogyny access to legal aid so they can sue the perpetrators for defamation and invasion of privacy.

Did you know that in Canada, hate speech against women is not a criminal offence? That is one gap in the law that we recommend be fixed immediately, as women are targeted for online hate, threats, and harassment at far higher rates than men.



*continued on page 3*

## LITIGATION UPDATE

It is a long-established principle of law in Canada that discrimination against pregnant women is sex discrimination — and therefore illegal. Yet how do we ensure that the social and economic costs of child bearing and child rearing are shared between men and women, just as the benefits are shared by society as a whole?

A significant struggle in the women's movement has centred on inequality within the family, specifically responsibility for childcare. In Canada, both LEAF and West Coast LEAF have played a key role in pushing the courts and government to create a legal framework for equality within the family sphere. In 1989, LEAF intervened in a pivotal case finding that discrimination on the basis of pregnancy is discrimination against women. In that case, the Court made a crucial observation: "it is unfair to impose all of the costs of pregnancy upon one half of the population." This year, West Coast LEAF has intervened in two cases about women's role within the family.

In April, we intervened in a case about the constitutionality of hearing fees at the Supreme Court of Canada, alongside our colleagues at the Trial Lawyer's

Association of BC and the Canadian Bar Association. We argued that the imposition of hearing fees in family law cases impedes access to justice, particularly for women, who are least likely to be able to afford the fees. Since the history of family law is in many ways the history of the emancipation of women, interfering with women's access to justice for family disputes is a direct interference with women's equality within the family and beyond.

In November, we are on our way again to the Supreme Court of Canada, this time in a case brought by the BC Teachers' Federation. The case concerns the purpose of benefits given to new parents. All parents need support during this crucial transition period to bond with their child and adjust to their new family reality. We argue that such benefits must also account for the additional support that birth mothers require to recover from the physiological impacts of giving birth. This case is the latest chapter in the struggle to eliminate discrimination on the basis of pregnancy and ensure that women who give birth are not disadvantaged by the important social work of child bearing.

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## UPDATE ON THE OLDER WOMEN'S DIALOGUE PROJECT

Older women face substantial discrimination in a wide variety of contexts. The Older Women's Dialogue Project provides a platform for their voices to be heard, and seeks to understand the issues they face and enable them to influence law and public policy.

In collaboration with the Canadian Centre for Elder Law (CCEL), West Coast LEAF is conducting a community-based research project on the experiences of older women. In 2012-13, we met with over 300 women of diverse backgrounds. CCEL documented their major barriers to well-being in a report entitled *Your Words are Worth Something*.

Now, we're on to Phase 2: further consultation and the creation of legal tools that older women will develop for themselves and their peers. Groups will identify a legal

or policy issue that is important to them and their communities and develop and implement an initiative to address it. We are excited to see the results from those engaged and committed women!

Over the Summer, we heard from older women living with multiple sclerosis and the challenges they face within the health system. Aboriginal Elders told us they learned silence in residential schools and the impact of that silence still haunts them. "It is very hard for me to speak up now, when I have not done so all my life," said one participant.

If you have suggestions about older women's groups you think we should contact, please tell Shahnaz Rahman at [familylaw@westcoastleaf.org](mailto:familylaw@westcoastleaf.org).

## THE MAKING OF *IS THAT LEGAL?*

As part of the cyber misogyny project, West Coast LEAF published a guide to the law for youth (and adults!) after discovering many people do not know their rights and responsibilities regarding online behaviour. The idea for *Is that legal? Understanding Canadian law about issues of online harassment, exploitation, and abuse* emerged through our focus group discussions on prevalent cyber misogyny issues with various service providers in the community. The unanimous yet surprising conclusion from anti-violence organizations, women's centres, and universities was that most youth and many adults have no idea what the law is when it comes to harassment and abuse online. These groups also told us that clear, relevant, and easy-to-understand legal information would be incredibly useful to them in their work assisting victims. That led to thinking about the need for an educational piece to complement the youth cyber misogyny workshop already in development ("Trendshift"). How could we make this critical information readily available for everyone?

*Is that legal?* and Trendshift were developed in consultation with youth. West Coast LEAF youth facilitators provided guidance on tone and language and other young people were surveyed about the issues relevant to their lives and how they use social media. *Is that legal?* and Trendshift were eventually focus-tested on 60 high school students to ensure the resources would resonate with these audiences.

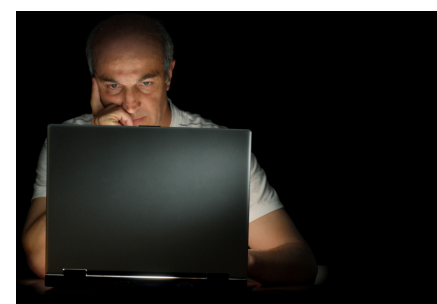
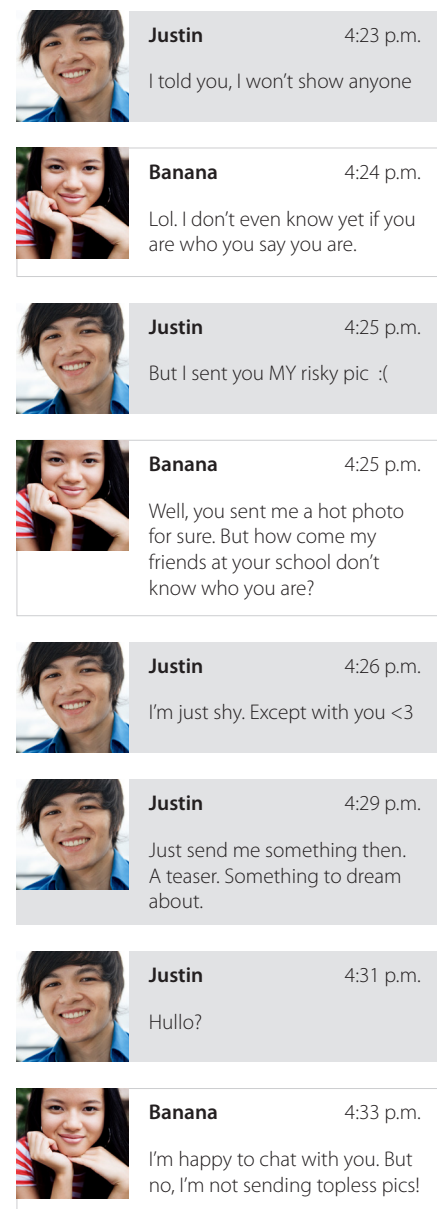
Our resources take a different tack than traditional cyberbullying information. They are sex-positive and Internet-positive. They acknowledge youth autonomy while giving them the information they need to keep themselves safe. "Empowerment is a novel approach to this topic as kids are typically just pounded with fear and messages not to do certain things," says Chrissie Arnold, Education Manager.

Everyone has the right to be safe online. *Is that legal?* and Trendshift encourage dialogue on what it will take to make the Internet a safe space for all people, while clearing up myths about what is legal and illegal in the online world.

*continued from page 1*

Another key recommendation is to criminalize the non-consensual distribution of intimate images — another huge gap in Canadian law. Earlier this year, a Saskatchewan man was acquitted of theft and mischief after posting naked images of his ex-girlfriend on the Internet. While the judge found that his behaviour was egregious and offensive, the judge found that the man had to be acquitted because there simply was no law that applied to what he had done.

We found the stories in this project very inspiring . . . stories of women who refused to be silenced by the hate speech and the vitriol directed against them online. For many of us, it is simply too much to bear. We heard stories of women shutting down their blogs and leaving online spaces where they had been contributors and participants in conversation, because dealing with the constant rape threats and the hatred spewed at them was simply too overwhelming. But others, like Jada, are speaking out and fighting like hell to reclaim their narrative.





**WE'RE EXTREMELY HONOURED** and humbled to receive the Rosemary Brown Award! Fearless advocate, educator, politician, feminist, writer, and mother, Rosemary Brown blazed a trail toward equality and changed history. Canada's first Black woman to be elected to a legislature, during her 14 years as an MLA she worked to remove sexism from BC's educational material, helped form the Berger Commission on Family and Children's Law, and so much more.



L-R: Board alum Jane Shackell, Board Chair Francesca Marzari, Executive Director Kasari Govender. PHOTO BC HUMAN RIGHTS COALITION



In the midst of so many inspiring women! L-R: Cleta Brown (lawyer, public servant, social justice advocate and also Rosemary Brown's daughter), Kasari Govender, Patsy George (recipient of the Order of Canada and Order of BC), Francesca Marzari.

**THANK YOU TO OUR THEMIS CLUB MONTHLY DONORS:** Sage Aaron, Heather Adam, Megan Adam, Jacquie de Aguayo, Alice Albert, Violet Allard, Carmela Allevato, Donna Anthony, Megan Ashbury, Sheena Ashdown, Mary Atkins, Wendy Baker, Ellen Balka, Renate Battaglio, Barbara Bell, Brenda Benham, Kathryn Berge, Pam Bhatti, Sonia Bianchi, David Black, Sharon Blaker, Johanne Blenkin, Carolyn Bouck, Deborah Bourque, Chris Bowers, Gwen Boyd, Susan Boyd, Alyssa Bradley, Anita Braha, Alison Brewin, Gretchen Brewin, Barbara Britton, Linda Brotherston, Anja Brown, Tracey Brown, Trudi Brown, Georgina Brunette, Lynn Bueckert, Nicole Byres, Lee Campbell, Lynne Carmichael, Jessie Caryl, Patricia Cochran, Faye Cooper, Lynn Copeland, Maria Corral, Linda Coyle, Dean Crawford, Laura Cundari, Rosalind Currie, Erin Dale, Cheryl Davies, Anne Davis, Jessica Derynck, Jennifer Devins, Caily Dipuma, Jill Doctoroff, Mary Doherty, George Doubt, Elaine Doyle, Elizabeth Dunn, Jenny Dyck, Avigail Eisenberg, Michelle Ellison, Annemarie Etsell, Catherine Evans, Darlene Facchin, Irene Faulkner, Aesha Faux, Joan Feyrer, Cassandra Florio, Amy Francis, Jillian Frank, Stephanie Fraser, Karen Frederickson, Deanne Gaffar, Alain Gagnon, Beverly Gallagher, Jodie Gauthier, Lauren Gehlen, Derek Gent, Crissy George, Marla Gilsig, Danielle Glass, Penny Goldrick, Maria Gomes, Frances Gordon, Jessica Gossen, Surya Govender, Patricia Graham, Laurie Grant, Nancy Greene Raine, Donna Greschner, Cherene Groundwater, Stephanie Gutierrez, Jessie Hadley, Sue Hammell, Jane Harris, Carol-Ann Hart, Claire Hatcher, Nancy Hay, Anna Helmer, Barbara Hestrin, Lesley Hobden, Agnes Huang, Amanda Huettner, Bridget Hughes, Nitya Iyer, Agnes Jackman, Sandra Jakab, France-Emmanuelle Joly, Lorena Kanke, April Katz, Phyllis Kenney, Katharine Kent, Karen Kilbride, Rysa Krmebusch, Natasha Krotez, Rosanne Kyle, Gudrun Langolf, Judith Lee, Martina Lee, Vera LeFranc, Allison Lepp, Linda Light, Lindsay Lyster, Zona Macdonald, Carolyn MacEachern, Heather MacFadgen, Ron MacIsaac, Maureen MacLeod, Signy Madden, Francesca Marzari, Virginia Mathers, Yuki Matsuno, Neilane Mayhew, Ashley McClare, Brenda McEachern-Keen, Cherlyn Mckay, Maris McMillan, Claire Meggs, John Andrew Mildon, Virginia Miller, Shirley Milligan, Shona Moore, Teri Mooring, Michelle Mungall, Kara Naish, Barbara Nelson, Caroline Nevin, Wendy Norman, Jan O'Brien, Thelma O'Grady, Niveria Oliveira, Chantel O'Neill, Margaret Ostrowski, Katrina Pacey, Margarita Papenbrock, Robin Pike, Erica Pinsky, Monique Pongracic-Speier, Nerys Poole, Susan Powell, Amber Prince, Natasha Prodan-Bhalla, Christina Reed, Ramona Reynolds, Shirley Ridalls, Jillian Ridington, Edna Ritchie, Catalina Rodriguez, Dominique Roelants, Andrea Rolls, Michelle Rupp, Allison Russell, Sheila Schierbeck, Stephanie Sersli, Jane Shackell, Elin Sigurdson, Wanda Simek, Kelly Simington, Kerry Simmons, Mary Woo Sims, Veronica Singer, Miriam Sobrino, Eloise Spitzer, Monica Staff, Veronica Strong-Boag, Glinda Sutherland, Sarah Tarry, Ruth Lea Taylor, Jane Templeman, Carla Terzariol, Janine Thomas, Paige Thombs, Zoe Towle, Joanna Track, Megan Trask, Wendy van Tongeren, Petra VanderLey, Elizabeth Vogt, Duff Waddell, Sheryl Wagner, Mike Walker, Frances Watters, Patricia Wejr, Janice Westlund, Elizabeth Whynot, Lauren Wihak, Wendy Williams, Val Wilson, Amanda Winters, Allison Wolf, Barbara Yee, Lois Yelland, Fiona York, Anita Zaenker, Andrea Zwack

## INVESTING IN WOMEN'S EQUALITY

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