

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.



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JOIN THE THEMIS MONTHLY GIVING CLUB!

The Themis Monthly Giving Club is our fastest-growing group of donors! Monthly giving is the best way to support West Coast LEAF. It provides sustainable revenue, reduces administrative costs, and helps us to plan for the future. Please contact Fiona York at 604-684-8772 ext. 113 for more details.

SPONSOR THE 2011 EQUALITY BREAKFAST

The 2011 West Coast LEAF Equality Breakfast will be held on Thursday, March 10 at the Fairmont Hotel Vancouver with best-selling author Linda McQuaig. To inquire about sponsoring the event, please contact Fiona York at 604-684-8772 ext. 113. Sponsors receive acknowledgement at the event and on West Coast LEAF materials.

TRANSFORMING OUR FUTURE WORKSHOP: Prince George

Transforming Our Future is a two-day practical public legal education course designed for activists, advocates, and community service providers to learn about the Canadian justice system, human rights law, equality rights, and how to develop strategies to address the impact of systemic discrimination.

Prince George Native Friendship Centre
1600 – 3rd Avenue, Prince George
February 24 & 25, 2011

\$100 per participant
subsidies available upon request

For more information and to register contact:
Deanna at education@westcoastleaf.org or call
1-866-737-7716 ext. 114 (toll-free)
604-687-8772 ext. 114 (local).



Themis Club Monthly Donors

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LEAFlet

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2011 EQUALITY BREAKFAST

Thursday, March 10, 2011
Fairmont Hotel Vancouver

Keynote Speaker
Author and journalist
Linda McQuaig



THE TROUBLE WITH INEQUALITY Bestselling author Linda McQuaig challenges the status quo

By Kaitlin Gray



Critically acclaimed author and award-winning journalist Linda McQuaig will be speaking on the impacts of economic inequalities at this year's Equality Breakfast on March 10, 2011 at the Fairmont Hotel Vancouver.

Over three decades of writing, McQuaig has gained a reputation for challenging the establishment. As a writer for *Maclean's Magazine* in the 1980's, she probed the early business dealings of Conrad Black, and was

awarded a National Newspaper Award in 1989 for a series of articles that sparked public inquiry into the activities of a political lobbyist in Ontario and led to that lobbyist's eventual imprisonment.

Through her writing, McQuaig questions the status quo, and in doing so has raised awareness of a variety of social issues. She is the author of seven best selling books, and currently writes an op-ed piece for the *Toronto Star*. A quick search of her column list yields topics such as "unearned wealth", "equality slipping away" and "restraint hits poor the hardest." In addition, her books have covered topics ranging from the effects of globalization in *The Cult of Impotence* (1998), regressive taxation in *All You Can Eat* (2002), and Canada's relationship with the United States in *Holding the Bully's Coat: Canada and the US Empire* (2007).

Questioning the status quo is important to West Coast LEAF. As a participant in West Coast LEAF's youth workshop *No Means No* asked, "Why is conformity so important that people are excluded because of it?" The refusal to accept things just as they are was part of the struggle to include true equality in the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* three decades ago, and part of West Coast LEAF's work today.

"The Trouble with Billionaires is about growing income inequality, about how income and wealth have become increasingly concentrated at the very top in the last few decades, and why this is a serious problem for Canadian society. My talk will deal with the broader subject of income inequality and its very negative impacts on women and men."
– Linda McQuaig

The Equality Breakfast will be MC'd by Vancouver journalist Kathryn Gretsinger, who has worked at the CBC for more than 20 years. Kathryn is an Adjunct Professor at the UBC Graduate School of Journalism and a lead trainer at CBC Radio.

Please join West Coast LEAF and Linda McQuaig at the
2011 Equality Breakfast. See insert for more details.

MISSING WOMEN'S INQUIRY

None of us are equal until all of us are equal

In November, West Coast LEAF submitted its formal application to be a part of the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry. If granted leave to participate, West Coast LEAF will ask questions and make arguments in order to bring before the Commission a substantive equality analysis of the issues concerning the missing women investigations.

From the application:

"West Coast LEAF submits that the Commission must examine the reasons for the failure to properly investigate these cases, and in particular to carry out an analysis of whether there is a racialized pattern to the disappearances and the failed investigations. The Commission must interrogate why the justice system neglected this file involving so many poor, Aboriginal, drug addicted, sex working women and men, as opposed to a file involving victims and witnesses without these intersecting layers of vulnerability."

West Coast LEAF brings its voice to the inquiry along with the many community groups who care deeply about this issue. Hearings to determine standing take place on January 31 and February 1, 2011.

POLYGAMY REFERENCE

An end to exploitation

West Coast LEAF made Opening Statements at the British Columbia Supreme Court in the Reference on the Constitutionality of Section 293 of the *Criminal Code* - the so-called "Polygamy Provision" - on November 23rd.

Since November, the court has heard both expert and first-person accounts outlining religious beliefs and the implications of a prohibition of polygamy, life in a polygamous community, and the effects of polygamy on society.

On behalf of West Coast LEAF, counsel (including West Coast LEAF Legal Director Kasari Govender and high-profile criminal lawyers Janet Winteringham, Q.C. and Deanne Gaffar) are arguing that the "polygamy provision" of the *Criminal Code* is there to prevent the exploitation of women and children, and that the way that polygamy is practiced in Canada is harmful to equality.

West Coast LEAF's position is that the polygamy provision should be "read down" (or narrowed in application) in order to apply only to situations of harm and exploitation.

The trial is scheduled to run until January 31, 2011.



Follow us @EqualityBfast11:
<http://twitter.com/#!/EqualityBfast11>

DONOR PROFILE

Maggie Bernet

By Kaitlin Gray



The Kindness of Strangers could easily have been written about West Coast LEAF donor Maggie Bernet. As an art philanthropist, Maggie regularly donates her art to organizations such as St. Paul's Hospital,

Delta Hospital, the BC Cancer Agency and Canuck Place, to name a few. One of her paintings will be included in the silent auction at this year's Equality Breakfast. "Whenever I donate, it doesn't matter who I donate to, it always makes me happy. It's a good feeling."

Maggie's artistic donations have had a significant impact on our local community. Although she wishes she could do more with West Coast LEAF, she is limited in her capacity to volunteer because of her disease. You would never know from looking at her that Maggie is sick. However, if you take the time to talk to her you realize that there is more to wellbeing than simply looking healthy. In 2005 Maggie was diagnosed with Primary Immuno-deficiency Disease (PIDD). She has a compromised immune system, and as a result is susceptible to infections that most of us could easily fight. Part of her illness is headaches, nausea and sinus problems, but she also has a hard time concentrating and this has on occasion extended to her memory. She was for example not able to remember how she first heard about West Coast LEAF, but her involvement comes as no surprise. She relates that whenever she comes across an organization she likes, she calls to see if they are interested in an art donation. In the future, she hopes to do a fundraiser to raise awareness to PIDD.

Maggie brings a unique perspective as a donor. She has first hand knowledge of the judicial system, having fought for four years for sole custody of her daughter. Further, her personal values are in line with West Coast LEAF's initiatives. She comments, "It doesn't matter if it's women or men or children - if someone treats them wrong or thinks they are right and they are doing the absolutely wrong thing, I will address it."

VOLUNTEER PROFILE

The world of Joan Morris

By Kaitlin Gray

As West Coast LEAF's most prolific volunteer writer, Joan Morris wrote most of her own profile. These are her words:

Q: How did you hear about West Coast LEAF?

A: At a luncheon with a keynote by Maureen McTeer, I was impressed by the amount of time women lawyers commit toward improving our local communities. I had always planned to look into volunteer work, and that was the nudge that motivated me to finally do it. My degree is in writing, not law, and my table companions suggested I contact West Coast LEAF.

Q: When did you start volunteering at West Coast LEAF? What initiatives have you been involved in?

A: I joined the Communications Committee in 2009. The perk of the work is the great assignments. I get to delve into history I wasn't taught in school, talk to the women who have shaped or enhance our opportunities, and glimpse the impact public services have on average and marginalized women. I am also on the Equality Breakfast committee for 2011.

Q: What is it about West Coast LEAF that made you want to get involved?

A: After I moved to Vancouver, I worked for a Speakers Bureau and was inspired by global humanitarians. What I learn through West Coast LEAF expands what I know of the world, what has been done, what needs to be addressed, and how it can be achieved.

Q: How do you hope to contribute in the future?

A: I've long-held an impression that art can influence minds. My goal is to write a profound piece that promotes tolerance via understanding. No small goal! If I could win a lottery, I'd startup a writing company, and I have a company name and logo draft! With or without a lottery win, I have to scout out the others for that company, and having realized that, I'm currently looking into forming partnerships.

THANK YOU AND AU REVOIR FROM ALISON

West Coast LEAF Executive Director Alison Brewin



I knew from my first Board meeting that West Coast LEAF was going to be an adventure. It has been. I want to thank every volunteer, staff and Board member, every supporter, for 11 years of learning, growth, and transformation. I leave the organization in the excellent hands of our outstanding staff team, a committed Board of Directors, and all of you.

The decision to leave was not an easy one, but my desire to support other Boards, other Executive Directors, and other organizations to contribute all they can to the lives of British Columbians leads me on another path. I hope to continue to work with the legal community on issues such as legal aid and relationship building across sectors. There are also some writing projects that have been calling, and most importantly I look forward to being at home for my growing children (whether they like it or not).

So it is not good-bye to West Coast LEAF or the legal and non-profit communities, but see you later. It has been a profound pleasure and honour to be a part of this work and this organization.

DO YOU WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE LAW AND EDUCATE OTHERS?

West Coast LEAF is currently recruiting facilitators between the ages of 18-24 for our youth programs: No Means No and Youth in the Workplace.

Youth facilitators will deliver workshops to pre-teens and teens on the topics of consent, sexual assault, workplace rights, sexual harassment and discrimination.

- Get in-depth training on the curriculum as well as presentation and classroom management skills
- Gain valuable experience in workshop development and presentation
- Learn about Canada's legal system, legal rights and public legal education.

Youth between the ages of 18-24 are encouraged to apply by February 4th!

For more information and registration contact Deanna Ogle at: education@westcoastleaf.org or 604-684-8772 ext. 114

