

B. C. HUMAN RIGHTS COALITION

ANNUAL REPORT

2000 - 2001

**Produced for the Annual General Meeting
Held at B.C. Human Rights Coalition
May 23rd, 2001
6:00 p.m.**

The B. C. Human Rights Coalition gratefully acknowledges the Law Foundation of British Columbia for our core funding, as well as Multiculturalism B.C. and the City of Vancouver.

Board of Directors 2000-2001

Table Officers:

President: Kenneth Smith
Vice-President: Fif Fernandes
Secretary: Judy Lynne
Treasurer: Terri Kennedy

Members at Large:

Kristen Gagnon
Leila Harding
Nafysa Lalani
Wendy Liew
Alicia Mercurio
Joy Olson
Deborah Strulow
Matthew Yun

Staff 2000-2001:

Peter Beaudin (Advocate)
Lani Koonpackdee (Administrative Assistant - present)
Susan Jardine (Administrative Assistant - until September 2000)
Marilyn Minkler (Office Manager)
Susan O'Donnell (Executive Director)

Bookkeeping and Accounting:

Administration: Cat L'Hirondelle, (L'Hirondelle Financial Services)
Auditor: Joanne Dorman, C.A.

Legal Supervision:

Barb Cornish, Robertson Downe; Rob Horricks

2000-2001 Recipient of the Renate Shearer Memorial Award

Maurice Copithorne, Q.C.

REPORT FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Our last Annual General Meeting was held May 10, 2000 where we elected a new Board of Directors. We held our full day strategy and evaluation meeting later in the year, on October 22, 2000. In the interest of streamlining the work of our Board, we integrated the Human Rights Commission Committee and the Community Liaison Committee into the Board as a whole. We continue to maintain a separate Services and Staff Liaison Committee, the Communications Committee, and the Finance Committee.

We decided at our evaluation this year that many of our priorities, such as the newsletter we never quite get around to printing, and the expansion of our public education could be accomplished by properly developing our website. To this end, the Communications Committee has applied to Heritage Canada for the funds to develop a more comprehensive website. We would like to be able to produce most of our human rights education on this website, as well as a human rights newsletter. We continue to believe that the major priority of the Directors of the Coalition is to maintain and strengthen our funding base. Thanks to the Law Foundation's recognition of our staff's workload, we can welcome Lani Koonpackdee, our new Administrative Assistant. Lani works at the Coalition three days a week, from Wednesday through Friday.

Although we continue to hope that there will one day be a clinic in human rights in which our Coalition partners with Community Legal Assistance Society, we reluctantly acknowledge this year that its status remains "in limbo". We remain committed to working closely with CLAS, and congratulate them this year for the celebration of their 30th anniversary in working for equality rights.

The Board is very pleased that in addition to the regular service work in advocacy, education and contracts, that we have been able to take on some very important community projects this year. We were able to play an important role in achieving pay equity legislation for women in the private sector. We made an important contribution in working with Multiculturalism B. C., the United Nations Association and the Canadian Anti-Racist Education and Research Society on the provincial consultations for the World Conference Against Racism to be held in South Africa in August 2001. Board and staff worked together with the new Commissioner of Investigation and Mediation, Mary Beeching, to assist in the reform of the complaints process at the B. C. Human Rights Commission. And this year saw the completion of our special package advertising our contract services.

We also joined the United Community Services Coop (“the Co-op”) this year. By pooling resources, the Co-op creates opportunities for non-profit organizations to enjoy savings. In this regard, we have joined a “pooling of current accounts” at VanCity which results in a substantial increase of interest earned on our funds held at VanCity. Similarly, we have entered into an agreement with Telus and several other Co-op members that allows us to enjoy reduced telephone rates. Finally, our membership in the Co-op has allowed us to open an account with B.C. Solutions, which includes, among other things, Queen’s Printer, Product Distribution Centre, Office Products Centre, and Government Publications.

The Renate Shearer award winner was selected by the United Nations Association this year. It went to Maurice Copithorne, who is currently working for the United Nations as the special representative on the human rights situation in Iran. He also served as Canadian High Commissioner in Hong Kong for three years. Mr. Copithorne was presented his award at our annual celebration of International Human Rights Day, which was held on December 7th, 2000 this year.

Next year will see a new government in British Columbia, and a new Minister Responsible for Human Rights. The Coalition hopes that jurisdiction for human rights will remain with the Attorney General, and looks forward to an ongoing consultative relationship between our government and the B. C. Human Rights Coalition.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
B. C. HUMAN RIGHTS COALITION

STAFF REPORT:

Education and Consultation: 2000-2001

We provided education to over 1,739 students this year, a small decrease from last year (1,988). Our education programme travelled all over the province, and covered every aspect of human rights, from harassment training to the duty to accommodate, from policy development to how to conduct an internal investigation. We taught private and public sector employers and employees, public institutions, unions, and community organizations.

With regards to consultation, this can take a variety of forms. We meet with

individuals, community organizations and groups who wish to know more about us, or who wish some assistance in accessing our library and resources. We also assist groups, employers, colleges and unions who wish some assistance in developing policies on human rights issues. We did over 334 of these consultations since our last Annual Report. This number is up from 306 such consultations reported in last year's Annual Report.

Advocacy: 2000-2001

As you can see, we carried 243 human rights complaints this year, that is a increase from 223 last year. We closed 58 files this year (some containing multiple grounds for complaints), compared to 76 last year.

As of March 28th, 2001, the Coalition is carrying the following files:

Sexual Harassment	16
Sex Discrimination	33
Race Discrimination	20
Physical Disability	36
Mental Disability	9
Place of Origin	21
Ancestry	7
Age Discrimination	6
Political Belief	1
Criminal Record	1
Family Status	12
Marital Status	1
Religious Belief	8
Sexual Orientation	6
Section 43	3
Employment Equity	1
Other	4

185 Open Files

In addition to these, the following files were closed between March 28th, 2000 and March 28, 2001 :

Physical Disability 14 4 advice and/or assistance provided; 1 settled \$3,500; settled - complainant allowed to take

		driving test; 1 settled - \$1,000 and accommodation; 1 upheld - \$6,500 damages; 1 upheld - \$1,500 damages; 1 settled - \$30,000 general damages; 3 no instructions; 1 no complaint.
Sex Harassment	11	2 upheld - \$9,000 lost wages and \$4,000 hurt feelings; 1 settlement agreement negotiated; 1 settled - \$3,600 general damages; 1 compliance education; 1 reconsideration denied; 1 complainant retained counsel; 1 assistance provided; 2 no more possible options; 1 no instructions.
Sex Discrimination	7	1 settled - \$3,000; 1 settled - \$5,200 general damages; 1 settled - \$34,000 damages and retraining; 1 settled - \$15,500 general damages and lost wages; 1 Commission abandoned appeal; 1 no instructions.
Race	6	1 settled - \$6,000; 1 matter resolved; 3 opinion and/or advice provided; 1 no instructions
Mental Disability	4	2 advice and/or opinion provided; 1 settled - complainant allowed to take course; 1 no instructions.
Age	4	1 settled - \$5,000 general damages; 1 settled - \$10,000; 1 advice and/or opinion provided; 1 dismissed.
Family Status	3	2 advice and/or opinion provided; 1 no instructions.
Religious Belief	2	1 written opinion provided; 1 no instructions.
Place of Origin	1	Advice and/or opinion provided.
Sexual Orientation	1	Assistance and advice provided.
Criminal Record	1	Advice and/or opinion provided.
Source of Income	1	No complaint.
Private Contract/Policy	1	Workplace harassment policy designed.
Reconsideration	1	Advice and/or opinion provided.
Intervention - Supreme Court of Canada	1	Appeal allowed; the Court adopted all of the Coalition's factum.

In conclusion, the Coalition carried 243 human rights complaints over the past year. Each of our files is reviewed approximately every four months by our supervising lawyers. These are Barbara Cornish who is with Robertson Downe, and Rob Horricks.

OTHER HUMAN RIGHTS WORK AT THE COALITION:

British Columbia Provincial Consultations in Preparation for the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination and Related Intolerance South Africa - 2001

The British Columbia Provincial Consultations held between September 19 - October 21, 2000 constitute British Columbia's regional contribution to the federal government submission for the World Conference against Racism, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (WCAR). In a unique partnership between the community and the provincial government, these consultations reached out across the province to involve the broadest input.

The consultations were held in Kamloops, Prince George, Castlegar, Nanaimo and Surrey from September 19, 2000, through October 21. As well, a special two day consultation was held for aboriginal people. Finally on March 16, groups were brought to Vancouver for a provincial forum to finalize recommendations and outcomes.

The consultations were organized by the B. C. Human Rights Coalition, Canadian Anti-Racism Education and Research Society, United Nations Association and the Government of British Columbia. A Steering Committee of the government and non governmental partners was formed in the summer of 2000 to coordinate the regional consultations, prepare an information package for participants and to help prepare NGOs to participate directly in the WCAR in South Africa.

The information package included a background paper explaining the context, purpose and main themes of the World Conference, a set of questions designed to frame discussion in workshops at the consultations, a summary of international obligations undertaken by Canada, and a manual on how to prepare to attend in South Africa.

Participants in the UN Consultations were asked to focus on the British Columbia

context, when assessing progress made in light of international commitments to eliminate all forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. The outcomes and recommendations from these consultations are available in print from Multiculturalism B. C., under the theme of the World Conference, *United to Combat Racism: Equality; Dignity; Justice*.