



Prince George New Hope Society's

The Goddess Gazette

PG New Hope Society, 1046 Fourth Avenue, Prince George, BC, V2L 3J1 www.princegeorgenewhopesociety.ca
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"If you are here to help me then you are wasting your time, but if you have come because your liberation is bound up in mine, then let us begin"

Lily Walker

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History of Sex Work in Prince George

The history of selling sex in Prince George dates back a long time. Selling sex has not always been dangerous, undignified, or based on survival. One local piece of our history dates back to the 1920's. Carmen Montgomery-Elliot was a well-know proprietor of several "Happy Houses" around town. In 1928, the Albany Rooms was patronized by mill workers and loggers. The men would arrive by the CNR line passenger service on Friday night, stay at the *Albany Rooms* and catch the 6 AM Monday morning train back to work. Next to the *Albany Rooms* was the *Alaska Rooms*, where Afro-Canadian womyn were said to have "thrived" in the business of selling sex.

Prince George's first city hall was housed in a former brothel located near Third and Victoria. The former brothel, known as Irene Jordan's Palace of Pleasure, was the first two-piano brothel in the

northern interior. The establishment fell on hard times and was moved to Third and Victoria where it was leased by the City and converted into Prince George's first City Hall.

It is important to us, as womyn who have or are involved in selling sex for survival or by choice, to take a moment and acknowledge that "problems" of sex work is not the act of selling sex but rather the conditions in which it occurs. The problems for us, are about violence, addictions, poverty, homelessness and so on. Furthermore, when you add stigma and discrimination to the likes of it all, it further jeopardizes the womyn who are actively involved in this line of work.

We wanted to include a bit about history in our first edition as a testament to all the womyn who have not been included in the

writing of "history", everywhere.

Research provided by: the PG Public Library, the PG Oral History Society, Bob Harkin's "Prince George's Memorable Mayors" speech (1999) and by EF Williams' 1994 "Ladies of the Night" bus tour timeline.



Shown above: New Hope Drop-in space.

isolated. This is a common topic on Sunday nights when the drop in centre is open. We offer our smiles, hugs and support to give back some of the hope that has been lost from so many lives. The centre has been operating for nearly a year now and averages around 12 womyn on a Sunday evening for the four hours that it is open. To date, we have provided services to over 60 different womyn. At the centre we have a small kitchen, lounge area, computer area and workshop room. Our first priority is to help the womyn in the immediacy of their circumstances. The reality of it is to "help them to stay alive" until they may be ready to exit sex work. For more information contact us at (250) 552-0890.

New Hope at a Glance

"From a tiny seed grows a small yet potentially blossoming bud." This quote sums up the past year that New Hope has been open. It all began in June of 2005 when I had the opportunity to meet with a small, yet powerfully passionate group of womyn who identified as the *BC Coalition of Experiential Women*. At that time, I had only been a member of the coalition for a few months. The ideas that came out of the meeting were so inspiring. It was shocking to realize that there were no services specifically

geared towards sex workers in Prince George. Actually, there were no services for them in the entire northern region of BC. Considering the devastating problems that surface around "prostitution", I felt committed to do something to help empower the womyn on our streets. New Hope opened their doors for the first time on September 4, 2005.

It is heart wrenching to watch womyn suffer because they have nowhere to go and they feel so



A young womyn uses the computer room.



Ask Nurse Betty

Dear Nurse Betty, is it true that lube lessens the chance of the condom breaking?

...the place where you can ask and we will tell! All responses have been considered by a registered nurse. For further information, call the BC Nurseline at 1-866-215-4700. If you have questions email them to newhopesociety@shaw.ca

Signed, Clueless.

Dear Clueless, yes it is true that proper lubrication can help keep you from a “broken condom” situation and here’s why. The friction (rubbing) between dry skin in the vagina and the latex of the condom could cause the condom to break. Not to mention you will get sore without lubrication! Also, it is important

to use the right lubrication. Pick a water based or silicone based lube. Make sure to check the label to see what the lube is made of and avoid using lubes with oil in it – oils break condoms! If the condom does break, do not wait to see if your period comes or not. Go and get the free Emergency Contraceptive Pill (ECP) at the needle exchange, Central Interior Native Health, or the All Options Pregnancy Counselling Program which has drop-in on Mon-Fri from 1-4 at the Northern Interior Health Unit (1444 Edmonton Street). ECP must be taken within 5 days of unprotected sex. The sooner you take it, the better it works! Free condoms are available at the Northern Interior Health Unit, Needle Exchange, Positive Living North and the Women’s Health and Wellness Program.

Dear Nurse Betty, My boyfriend and I have just recently started experimenting with sex toys. Someone told me that we shouldn’t share them. Is this true? What will happen if we share our toys?

Signed, Desperate for an Answer.

Dear Desperate for an Answer, It is true that you shouldn’t share your sex toys, but if you do share them, you should use condoms on your toys. Put a condom on the toy before you use it then take the condom off and wash the toy when you are done. Always put a new condom on it when your partner is ready to use it! Do not use silicone based lubes on silicone toys, use water based. To wash your toy use a spray on toy cleaning soap or a gentle liquid soap. It is important to be careful when using toys because sexually transmitted diseases can be passed from vaginal fluid and semen on the toys. Be safe and have fun!

Dear Nurse Betty, I am really scared. I got myself in an unsafe situation and I think I might be HIV positive. I am so ashamed because I am educated about risky behaviour and I knew better. I don’t want to get checked out at my regular place I go to. Please tell me where I can go for testing that would be more confidential.

Signed, Regretful.

Dear Regretful, everyone makes mistakes sometimes, don’t beat yourself up. The most important part is that you are taking care of yourself by getting tested. You may also want to call Positive Living North, the local AIDS service organization, for support until your testing is confirmed. Their number is 562-1172. For confidential testing check the following places out:

Northern Interior Health Unit (STD program) 565-7381
Central Interior Native Health 564-4422
Needle Exchange 564-1727

Your family doctor is also able to set up HIV testing for you. Good Luck!

Dear Nurse Betty, I went to the beach the other day and was wondering about something. Can you give someone HIV or Hep C if your foot blister pops and you share your shoes with someone else?

Signed, Just Wondering.

Dear Just Wondering, If blood is present the risk is more for Hepatitis C because it can live out of the body for up to a week. The virus still needs a way to get into the other person’s body. This can happen if they have an “open” sore or deep “open” cracks in their feet. HIV cannot survive outside of the body so the chance of transmission is unlikely.

Classifieds

Enfalac baby powdered milk, 850g can, \$6. Enfalac toddler, 850g can, \$6. Call 614-8380

New clothes, some with tags never worn, various styles. For men, women and kids. \$3 and up. Call 614-8380

New Children's toys and games, assorted, water ropes, dolls, talking toys, etc. \$1 and up. Call 614-8380

Brand new boys Mickey Mouse winter suit (2 piece), size 12-18 mos, never worn. Paid \$75 asking \$20. Call 614-8380

New Adidas down-filled winter jacket, smaller size for young teenager or child, navy blue, 2005 style. Paid \$120 asking \$30 Call 614-8380

Wanted: Singer/Songstress seeking musicians with time for practice. Community/Feminist/Activists. Gigs lined up. Call 561-0177.

Wanted: Complete double bed w/frame in good condition. Full size couch in good condition. Call 564-0379 leave message for Kayla.

Mature, employed adult seeking 2-3 bedroom mobile, outside of the PG bowl, with possible acreage to rent. Call 561-0177.

Group facilitator seeking women interested in “Out of Box” recovery and maintenance for once a week meetings. Call 561-0177 for details.

To submit a classified for our October 1st issue, please call 552-0890.

GIRL GRAFFITI



Black and Blue

I sit in silence agony and pain
I tried to show him how to love not blame
I run away he grabs hold
My arm is twisted bent and I grow old

And tired of all this weariness
The hate not spoken his past I get
His kind gestures all are tainted black
I have to boulderise counter attack

Because I'm
Black and blue
This kind of love the tears burn thru
Black and blue
Does my mirror image haunt you
Oh!

His poison I am so addicted to
His charms come with a price a heavy due
It leaves a hole deep within my soul
I'll have to get away maybe still be whole

Black and Blue
This kind of love the tears burn thru
Black and blue
Does my mirror image haunt you
Oh!

I'll run away, far from this life
No where to stay, the streets is where I lay
For my children I will pray

Cold and lonely broke and tired
Too sick too shamed I'm scared
And a little wired

Have to find a ticket to the moon
Hey mister give me a ride pull a trick or
two
Oh date of wine I'm not your find
I'm a soul survivor not your "ass" to grind

Black and blue
This kind of love the blood stains you

Contrary to what some may think, many of the womyn and youth on or from the streets have talents that they don't often get a chance to share with others. We have dedicated space in this newsletter so that their voices can be heard through their pictures or words. Please take a moment to hear what they have to say! If you are a sex worker and have a submission contact us at 250-552-0890.

Black and blue
Does my mirror image haunt you
Oh!

You say I cant leave yet then pay for my
time
Just want to step outside pretend I feel
fine

He grabs my hair pulls my head down
I am human hurting not your punching
round

Black and blue
This kind of love the blood shames you
Black and blue
Does my mirror image haunt you
Oh!

Confused and dazed on the wrong track
Trippin hard to find a way back
Abused and scolded soul so worn
Desperate cries inside wars
Keep your dollars find my sense
Broken dreams peace of mind spent
Standing sideways need some sleep
I'm black and blue wounded soul, surviv-
ing soul, wounded soul, surviving soul
for me to keep

Black and blue
Black and blue
When it's safe I'll cry the tears to heal
thru.....Black and blue

No more black and blue
No more black and blue
Please
No more black and blue

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Halijo Webster is a local performer who speaks out on violence against womyn and drug addiction in Prince George. She was the recipient of a Prevention of Violence against Womyn award in 2006. Halijo is also on the Board of Directors at the Prince George New Hope Society. She graciously created a CD single titled "Black and Blue" in which she donates the proceeds to New Hope. To purchase the song on CD call 552-0890. You can learn more about this amazing womyn by visiting her website at www.hjwebster.ca

Painted Dolls

She stands alone
Her saddened face cloaked in the darkness
of the eve
Her body trembles from the cold of the
fall breeze
She still stands alone

Hurt by the harsh words of passer-by's,
she is reminded of what she does
Her body aches for the one thing that
keeps her on this lone dark corner
Her mind races for the one thing that less-
ens the pain
Yet she still stands alone, waiting for
someone to see her

Slowly she looks up and peers over her
shoulder
Across the street a girl stands hidden in
the dim light,
A mirror in her small hands, she paints
her face
If fate is on her side, she can escape the
cold for a short while

They connect and wave in greeting,
Walk across the street to meet
Hug
Briefly exchange words
Then retreat back to their stage where they
stand on display
They are not alone, they have each other

Cont'd page 4...

Pandora's Box



Pandora by John William Waterhouse, 1896.

Dear Pandora, my boyfriend wants to have anal sex with me and I really don't want to. He knows I am scared but still keeps asking. I have heard it hurts but can be really good. What should I do?

Signed, In Love and Confused

Dear, In Love and Confused, I would suggest you do what you are comfortable with. If you do decide to try it here are some tips to make it safer and more enjoyable. First, use a lot of lubrication and make him go really slow and gentle. Anal sex is best when there is trust! Talk about it. Make a plan. Are you going to use condoms? If so, make sure that the lube is water-based. Remember, make him promise to stop when you ask him to.

Dear Pandora, I think my boyfriend of two years is cheating on me. I have discharge with really strong odor. He has been my only sexual partner for the last two years. I am really embarrassed to go see a doctor and I am really angry that he would do this to me because I thought we had a good relationship.

Signed, Pissed Off in Prince George

Dear, Pissed off in Prince George, It sounds

Pandora's Box is a column where general life questions are answered by the womyn who help write this newsletter. The answers are researched and then edited by select professionals in the community. At first we were fixated on the term "Pandora's Box" because it sounded sexy and mysterious; however, after it was recommended that we research the meaning behind Pandora's Box, we were quite fascinated with what we found. According to Greek mythology, Pandora, meaning "all gifted", was a womyn created by Zeus to punish mankind for Prometheus' theft of the secret of fire. The hidden meaning "All Gifted" was because she was given traits from the different Gods. She was given to Prometheus' brother Epimetheus as a gift from Zeus. Epimetheus ignored his brother's warning and fell in love with her. Her dowry was a jar. In other versions of the story, it has been interpreted as a box. The world was originally worry free without misfortune. Epimetheus told Pandora not to open the jar that she brought with her from Zeus. However, after a while Pandora's curiosity led her to open the jar. By opening the jar, she released misfortune into the world. She quickly shut it in time to keep one thing left in the jar: hope. The world became a place filled with plague, sorrow, poverty, crime, despair, greed and so much more until Pandora eventually revisited the jar and hope was released. According to the story, "mankind always has hope in times of evil." This piece of Greek mythology is an important analogy of the work that we do for sex workers at New Hope. This column is also a way of addressing some of the fears that we may have about different things happening in the world and in our lives. If you have any questions you would like to ask us send them to newhopesociety@shaw.ca and we will do our best to fit them in the column. Enjoy the column!

like you are sure that he gave you something during sex. First things first, it may be a vaginal infection. Go and see your doctor or a local health nurse to rule this out. Yes, seeing someone about this can be uncomfortable but you are not alone. Many womyn feel this way, but it is important that we have regular check-ups so that we can stay healthy. I would suggest you go somewhere where you feel more comfortable. Your relationship might be fine. You might want to ask yourself why you think he cheated on you. Try not to lay blame until you get checked out by a health professional.

Dear Pandora, Can I get into trouble for having sex with people if I am HIV positive?

Signed, Stressed Out and Scared

Dear Stressed Out and Scared, Yes you can get in trouble for having sex with people when you are HIV positive and you do not disclose your having HIV with them. When people do not tell the truth then it becomes a problem. It may be difficult for many people to disclose to others that they are HIV positive because of the shame and embarrassment that is attached to it. Anyone who you are participating in a high risk activity with has the right to know if you are infected with HIV so that they can make an informed decision about

participating in the activity with you. High risk activities include sex, and sharing needles, and equipment.

Girl Graffiti Cont'd

They are friends, painted dolls in a store window
 Braced for a competition
 Who is prettier?
 Younger
 More child-like
 The one who is successful could gain
 refuge from the cold of the night

They choke back the fear and the pain
 Each faced with the task of fanciful
 poses
 Like bait, they attempt to lure the treasure

They rise to stand tall
 Through the cold deadness and flames
 of agony that their legs endure
 The façade of a proud woman in her
 element begins

For now they are fighting a losing battle
 Tomorrow they will be comrades yet
 again.

By Christal Capostinsky
 Former sex worker

In the Spotlight: Taking Action Now

One of the objectives for New Hope was to create a campaign specific to the centre and for active and former sex workers. The womyn involve themselves around community education and promoting New Hope. At the same time they participate in self reflection and skill development activities. We see it as a transitional exiting program; whereas, the campaign acts as a way for womyn to move into a place where they may feel safe enough to leave sex work. Furthermore, for those womyn who have already exited sex work, it is a way for them to come together to support one another in their lives and recovery. The first few months that we began the project, it was difficult to find the "right" womyn for the campaign. New Hope was looking for womyn

who were interested in educating people around sex worker issues and who were willing to make a commitment to show up and do the work. We were aiming for people who worked well together, had a story to tell and were willing to share it with others. We also needed to ensure the safety of the womyn who had already exited sex work and were in their recovery. To do this we had to approach womyn who were close to exiting and not always on the streets. It has been nearly six months since the project started and the womyn are well on their way to meeting the objectives they set out to accomplish. They have produced a Bad Date Bulletin to warn other sex workers of violent consumers. They have attended workshops and learned new

skills and now they have helped create "The Goddess Gazette", which will be an ongoing project. The womyn also participate in street outreach on weekend evenings. In the coming months they hope to make a larger impact in the community to change the negative perceptions and stereotypes around sex workers. One thing that the womyn have recently done is change the name of the campaign to "Taking Action Now!" Look for "In the Spotlight" in the coming months for articles written by T.A.N participants. These are their thoughts on the campaign:

"I like the girls that we meet with."

"It's a feeling of accomplishment!"
 "It feels like I am contributing to society."
 "The things we are doing now helps other people understand and hear the good things we are doing right now in our lives."
 "I like being able to help other people, like I was helped."



Above: One participant helping with street outreach.

"The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams"
 Eleanor Roosevelt

Safer Sex Word Search

- COMFORTABLE
- COMMUNICATION
- CONDOM
- DENTALDAMS
- DRY SEX
- FEMALE CONDOM
- FUN
- GLOVES
- HONESTY
- INTIMACY
- LUBE
- MONOGAMY
- RELATIONSHIP
- RESPECT
- SARAN WRAP
- SEMEN
- SEX TOYS
- SOBRIETY
- TESTING
- TRUST
- VAGINAL FLUID

N O G N Y T E I R B O S D I C
 F L M O D N O C O V E N I N O
 U E O I L H O N E S T Y U T M
 N O M T R U S T V E R K L I F
 R E L A T I O N S H I P F M O
 G S S C L L T M U J L S L A R
 N Y E I U E P O E Q K E A C T
 I O M N V V C N Y B Q V N Y A
 T T E U W A X O R L U O I Q B
 S X N M H I J G N E K L G O L
 E E A M E Q B A M D S G A I E
 T S Y O J F H M L Q O P V D S
 I B Y C D D R Y S E X M E L N
 S M A D L A T N E D J S M C O
 P A R W N A R A S C K E O E T

When you are finished the word search, can you figure out the hidden message at the bottom of the page? Scramble the letters to figure it out! Not all of the left over letters are in the message, you will have to use your creative expertise to solve the puzzle!! Go to our website to find out what the hidden message is.

From all of us at New Hope, Good Luck!



This is our logo at PG New Hope Society. It was created by the researcher, Sherrice Lucier

Here is a hint: We are responsible for our bodies in everything that we do!

Prince George New Hope Society



Reducing Barriers for Womyn
in Sex Work and Survival Sex

MISSION

At New Hope we recognize that there is a lack of services for womyn in the sex industry. We strive to bridge the gap in services for sex workers through creating a place of safety and security for womyn to access support services pertinent to their needs.

MANDATE

To identify and address the barriers that womyn face while working in sex work and survival sex in Prince George and Northern BC and to facilitate educational opportunities that will empower womyn who work in this environment.

Please call our office if you have any questions about the services we provide for street level sex workers (250) 552-0890.

**WE HAVE A WEBSITE NOW! Come visit us at
www.princegeorgenewhopesociety.ca**

Acknowledgements

I'd like to take the time to thank the people who helped to make the first issue of this newsletter possible: Bonita, Misty, Crystal, Carrie and Kayla who spent hours working to make this happen; Trina Chivilo who facilitated workshops and shared her talent with newsletter writing; The Prince George Public Library, and the Prince George Oral History Society for information about sex workers in Prince George; the registered nurse for the great feedback on the Nurse Betty column; Status of Women Canada for funding this initiative; the Vancouver Foundation for funding this initiative; and, the Women's Health and Wellness program and Northern Women's Wellness Information Centre for giving us space at the centre so that we can do our work! Thank you all for your contribution to make this newsletter possible!

Sincerely,

Christal Capostinsky
Coordinator, Prince George New Hope Society



Yes! I want to give to New Hope!

Please complete this form and enclose it with your payment, payable to Prince George New Hope Society. Send or drop off at: 1046 fourth Avenue, Prince George, BC, V2L 3J1. You can also stop by the Spruce Credit Union on Victoria Street and make a deposit into our account. Just let the teller know that you are making a donation to the Prince George New Hope Society. Please also understand that we cannot give tax receipts at this time as we are not yet a charitable organization. Thank you for your support!

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ Postal Code _____
Amount of donation \$ _____

Thank You!