



LEAF FEBRUARY EMAIL UPDATE: TABLE OF CONTENTS

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1. LEAF ADOPTS NEW SUPREME COURT OF CANADA CASE (BARNEY v. CANADA)

LEAF will apply to intervene before the Supreme Court in Barney v. Canada (et al) this month. LEAF will be working in partnership on this case with the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) and the Disabled Women's Network (DAWN) Canada.

Barney is a case that deals with some of the most appalling human rights violations that have ever incurred in Canada. The plaintiff in the case is Frederick Barney, an Aboriginal man who experienced repeated violent sexual assaults contemporaneously with emotional and physical abuse, isolation, and hunger as a child at the Alberni Indian Residential School during the 1960's. This was not an uncommon experience for Aboriginal children forced to attend residential schools. The residential school experience resulted in physical, psychological, spiritual and cultural harm for the most of the survivors of the experience, their families, and their communities. Barney is the first case of its kind and the outcome of this case will affect decisions made in future cases brought by survivors of institutional abuse.

The plaintiff in this case is a man who experienced the subject abuse as a child. Women and children are targeted for sexual violence and abuse because of socio-political conditions and power imbalances that create an experience of vulnerability that is imposed upon them. While boys, especially boys from disadvantaged backgrounds, are sometimes the victims of childhood sexual assault and abuse (as in this case), it is predominantly girls and women who are the targets of sexual abuse. It should also be made clear that the overwhelming majority of perpetrators of child sexual abuse are male. This reality will be central to the gender specific analysis that the LEAF coalition will apply in this case.

The LEAF coalition will make arguments in this case about the gendered racial affect of the residential school on Aboriginal women. For example, the high rates of violence within Aboriginal families can be linked to colonization and its practices, including the residential school system. In a recent study, approximately 25% of Aboriginal women reported being assaulted by a partner, compared to 8% for non-Aboriginal women in Canada. The residential school experience continues to affect Aboriginal women in Canada today as caregivers, parents and family members in Canada.

LEAF will be arguing that survivors of the Aboriginal residential school experience are entitled to compensation for physical and emotional abuse inflicted by the defendant prior to and contemporaneously with the sexual assaults at issue, as well as compensation for forced loss of culture and language. The oral hearing in this case is scheduled to be heard by the Supreme Court of Canada on May 16, 2005.

2. LEAF & STILL WE RISE

LEAF is a member of the Women's Future Fund (WFF), the first and only national women's federation in Canada. The goal of the WFF is to increase the self-sufficiency of national women's organizations that are working for equality and a better quality of life for women and girls across Canada. For more information about WFF please see <http://www.womensfuturefund.com/>

On February 11th, LEAF and the WFF were invited to speak to the Status of Women Chairpersons of the Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario (ETFO) at their annual conference "...and still we rise". LEAF's Director of Development spoke to over 35 women from across Ontario about the pressing need for equality rights litigation, law reform and education, and how LEAF's work is essential to address the source of women's inequality.

LEAF also had an information table at the evening portion of the event, where dozens of women stopped by to chat, learn more about LEAF and sign up for our email update. We thank the ETFO for their generous and ongoing support of LEAF and the WFF for sharing their time at this event with LEAF!

3. FAREWELL TO JENNIFER KOSHAN

Sadly Jennifer Koshan's term on the LEAF National Legal Committee has come to an end. We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to Jennifer for the invaluable contribution that she has made to LEAF. Jennifer has served on both the LEAF National Board and as Co-Chair of the National Legal Committee. We are tremendously grateful to Jennifer for the dedication, passion, wisdom and equality rights expertise that she brought to LEAF. Jennifer will be sorely missed and on behalf of everyone at LEAF, we wish her all the best for the future.

4. LEAF's 20th ANNIVERSARY

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S WEEK (March 6-12)

To bring attention to LEAF in our 20th anniversary year, LEAF branches across the country will be planning to participate in the marches and other activities happening in communities across Canada for International Women's Week (IWW). This series of events runs from Sunday, March 6 to Saturday, March 12, 2005, with the highlight being International Women's Day on March 8: the slogan for the march is "No to Violence, No War, Yes to Justice, Equality for All". A link to Status of Women's web site with more info about IWW is http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/dates/iwd/index_e.html

Contact your local LEAF branch, or the national office and we can direct you, if you and your friends would like to participate!

WEST COAST LEAF CONFERENCE (April 28-May 1)

Women's Rights & Freedoms: 20 Years (In) Equality. Registration details for the 20th anniversary equality conference being jointly hosted by West Coast LEAF and the National Association of Women and the Law (NAWL) are now available. To register, please visit the conference website at <http://www.equalityconference.com>

CONTRIBUTE A MEMORY!

If you have been involved with LEAF, as a volunteer, branch member, donor or event attendee, please send the national office stories, photographs, news clippings or any other "memories" you may have from the past. We would love to feature them in our upcoming newsletter!

5. DO YOU KNOW A WONDERFUL LEAF VOLUNTEER?

The LEAFLines newsletter will be distributed this April. The focus of this year's newsletter is profiling and celebrating the special individuals who give so much of their time, energy, and financial support to LEAF. We are currently seeking nominations for recognition in this newsletter that is sent to over 3,000 LEAF supporters across the country. If you know someone who should be profiled, please contact Angela Ryan-Rappaport by email at <mailto:a.ryan-rappaport@leaf.ca> or call (416) 595-7170 x225.

6. REASON TO GIVE

When LEAF intervenes in a case, we incur two kinds of out-of-pocket costs (these are in addition to what we spend on research, development and consultation): disbursements and counsel fees. Our preference is always to pay counsel in recognition of the value of their work. Unfortunately, we often do not have the funds to pay counsel that represent LEAF and we rely on counsel to volunteer their time.

Donations to LEAF help to ensure that counsel can be compensated for their time, effort, and invaluable expertise. LEAF needs your help to fund legal counsel for Barney and other upcoming cases.

For more information, or to make a tax-deductible donation to LEAF:

Call (416) 595-7170 x 234

Email <mailto:donate@leaf.ca>

Mail your donation to LEAF, 2 Carlton St., Suite 1307, Toronto, ON, M5B 1J3

Donate online through CanadaHelps.org at

<http://www.canadahelps.org/CharityProfilePage.aspx?CharityID=s12490>

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