

Arthritis: chronic pain management workshop

**Wednesday, June 1, 2011
5:00–7:00 p.m.
Sutherland Boardroom**

This spring the BC Arthritis Society will be presenting its Chronic Pain Management Workshop to BCTF staff and interested family members or friends.

This single, two-hour course focuses specifically on pain management. The main objective of the workshop is to improve participants' understanding of pain management in arthritis and its treatments, to introduce different methods to cope with chronic pain, and to help participants to assume an active role in their pain management. The program's intention is not only to help those with arthritis, but also to teach family members, partners and friends how to help people with arthritis.

The BC Arthritis Society offers many workshops in communities throughout BC and will be presenting this workshop in the BCTF building.

For further information, see www.arthritis.ca/

Health and wellness Habesha style by a ferenji

By Robyn Trask



Snapshot from the edge



Sometimes I am not entirely sure if spending my vacation time from the BCTF working in Ethiopia on a justice system project is a model of personal health and wellness, but it is certainly very engaging and I always return to Vancouver with new perspective. Trips to Ethiopia on this project can be challenging, including coping with an 11 hour time difference and jet lag, but at that same time the work is inspiring and in its own way rejuvenating.

The Building Effective Justice Systems project is being implemented by the Justice Education Society of British Columbia ("JES") with funding from the Canadian International Development Agency ("CIDA"). JES is a non-profit organization that was established more than 20 years ago as the Law Courts Education Society. JES creates programs and resources that improve access to British Columbia's justice system. To date, JES has produced over 50 legal publications, 28 websites, more than 50 instructional videos, and has introduced over one million British Columbians to their province's justice system. While most of JES's work is in Canada,

it is also a leader in justice reform programs abroad and has been involved in projects related to good governance and institution building in Central America, Mexico, Asia and Africa.

The goal of the JES project in Ethiopia is to develop the capacity of Ethiopian police, prosecutors and judges to respond to crimes of violence against women. The project includes training in crime scene investigation skills and major case management skills for police and prosecutors, and oral trial skills for prosecutors and the judiciary.

My work on the project includes assisting with the establishment of working relationships with local partners, conducting needs assessments and implementing the practical aspects of the project. Meeting



with the recipients of the project in Ethiopia, including Ethiopian police, prosecutors and judges is always fascinating. Working with Canadian police and prosecutors to implement the project is equally interesting. I learn something new from our Ethiopian partners and Canadian experts on each trip.

Ethiopia is a beautiful country, with a fascinating history and culture. Ethiopia is often recognised as the only African country to have resisted colonisation by the European powers throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, apart from a brief occupation by Italy. It is densely populated, with an estimated population of over 85 million people, although most Ethiopians live in rural areas. Ethiopia is also known for its 12th Century rock-hewn churches, the dynasty of Emperor Haile Selassie, its renowned coffee, and the claims of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church that it possesses the Ark of the Covenant.

Unfortunately, Ethiopia has also become known for its poor record in combating crimes of violence against women. In 2005, a World Health Organisation report found that in one region in the country, 71% of women surveyed had experienced physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner over their lifetime. There is desire to change this record from within the country. Local women's organisations have worked extremely hard to focus government attention on this issue. The JES project aims to assist with the justice sector response to these and other crimes of violence against women.

The capital city of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa, is a very interesting and complex place. Many inhabitants of the city live in abject poverty, while at the same time there is a very vibrant coffee culture and

cosmopolitan social life at local cafes, restaurants and spas. I always look forward to the excellent food I know I will eat while I am in Addis, including excellent Habesha (Ethiopian) cuisine (if you haven't had injera you need to try it!), delicious Italian restaurants, an amazing Indian restaurant and I think the best Thai food I have ever had. Parts of central Addis are built over a natural hot spring, and there are several places where you can soak in hot spring baths for a reasonable fee, including the pools of two hotels in the city.

Being a ferenji (foreigner) in Ethiopia is not uncommon. With the African Union ("AU") headquarters and the regional UN headquarters, the Economic Commission for Africa ("ECA"), both located in Addis, as well as many large embassies and Non-Governmental Organisations, there is always an interesting mix of Habeshas and ferenjis debating local and foreign politics and economy over a buna (coffee), chai or local St. George's beer at the end of the work day.

Over the last 12 years, I have spent time living, studying, and working with legal organisations in Zimbabwe, Sierra Leone and Ethiopia. All of these experiences have added different elements to my understanding of human rights, and particularly women's rights, in a global context. Although I might be a little tired on a Monday morning after the 25 hour journey from Addis (via a European airport), I am very glad to be able to continue to do this work. I am currently looking forward to the next stage of the JES project, when we will be implementing crime scene examination training for Ethiopian police and prosecutors for two weeks at the end of May. I am sure to return having shared in a very

interesting learning experience for all involved.

You can learn more about JES at: www.justiceeducation.ca

¹ Carcia-Moreno C., Jansen H., Ellsberg M., Heise L., Watts C., WHO Multi-country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence Against Women: Initial results on prevalence, health outcomes and women's responses, (World Health Organisation 2005), page 83.

Robyn Trask is Legal Counsel with the British Columbia Teachers' Federation. She works as an Ethiopia Project Consultant with the Justice Education Society of British Columbia during her vacation time from the BCTF.



Food bank tally

We understand that not everyone can contribute Soup or Dessert to share when we have our special days. Please remember that all staff are welcome to come and enjoy the food, socialize and have fun. If you are not able to contribute food please consider bringing a cash donation for the Vancouver Food Bank.

To date we have raised:

Soup day, January 12, 2010	\$300
Soup day, December 3, 2010	\$852
Dessert day, February 23, 2011	\$259
Total to date	\$1,411

—Donna Coulombe



My new toy —a hearing aid!

by Dawn McCormick

I never thought I would be so happy to be wearing a hearing aid, but it has really changed my life.

About 10 years ago, I was diagnosed with an acoustic neuroma which is a benign tumour attached to the nerves which make up part of the acoustic system. The tumour was treated with lasers and has actually reduced in size over the course of the past 10 years.

When I was first diagnosed, I was receiving MRIs every 6 months, later reduced to once a year and, finally, once every 2 years. In October 2010 I had my final check up at the cancer clinic—protocol calls for the patient to be followed for ten years after diagnosis. The medical establishment is happy that my tumour is inactive and has actually shrunk.

My hearing has been severely impaired for several years, to the point that I considered myself deaf in my right ear. At the time of my initial diagnosis, I was told that a hearing aid would be of no benefit to me because the nerves were so damaged. However, at the suggestion of my oncologist last October, I decided to have a further hearing test and it turned out I actually was a candidate for a hearing aid.

Hearing aids are expensive and are not covered by MSP; however our extended coverage with Pacific Blue Cross reimburses \$1,500 every 5 years. Mine cost \$2,395 which is an average price but, according to Dr.

Charles Fontaine, the audiologist at the Western Institute for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, was the perfect type for me and my particular situation.

At my first appointment at the Western Institute, my hearing tests were reviewed, some further tests were done, and a mould taken of the inside of my ear—not very pleasant!

Once the mould was ready, I was back for my fitting, which actually was a lot easier than I had imagined. The mould must fit really snugly and so takes a bit of work to learn how to insert and remove. The actual “hearing” part is programmed by computer and I was scheduled to return 14 days later to have the volume increased—however, I was having such success that I was back within a week to be re-calibrated! I now hear so much more. I had been cautioned that I might only be able to handle 1 to 1.5 hours for the first little while and that the noise level outdoors might be overwhelming. However, being so motivated and determined to hear again, I have been wearing it successfully for about 11 hours a day.

I just wish I had done this years ago!!



End of life issues

On January 20, 2011 Whitney Burgess (Post-Baccalaureate Diploma in Gerontology, SFU) presented a lunch-and-learn on end-of-life issues and how to plan and prepare for them.

Below are links to resources referenced during the presentation:

Legal: The People’s Law School publications web page has a list of PDF information documents including: Being an Executor, Power of Attorney and Writing Your Will.

www.publiclegaled.bc.ca/section.asp?catid=139

Home and Hospice Care: This health authority site describes available options, including home care and hospice palliative care, to help the patient, family and friends maintain a more independent level of care. www.fraserhealth.ca/your_care/

Planning: This link is to the My Voice: An Advance Care Plan document, a ready-made advance care plan dealing with CPR and life support/medical interventions. www.fraserhealth.ca/your_care/future_health_care_decisions/my_voice_workbook

(N.B. A living will (including My Voice) cannot be used to authorize a person to speak on another's behalf for personal and health care matters. A Representative Agreement is needed for such authorization.

Agreements: Nidus Personal Planning Resource Centre and Registry contains information regarding both types of Representation Agreements and advance directives. www.nidus.ca/

Provincial Resources: This Province of BC maintains a website outlining End-of-Life care services. It includes links to both B.C.'s Framework for End-of-Life Care as well as the Joint Protocol for Expected/Planned Home Deaths in British Columbia. www.health.gov.bc.ca/hcc/endoflife.html

Upcoming event



Summer Solstice Salad Day

June 21, 2011

Bring a salad to share with your co-workers. If you are unable to contribute a salad, please consider making a donation to the food bank.

Volunteer opportunity

Looking for a volunteer activity that will have a positive impact on the environment?

Think of volunteering your time to the Lower Mainland Green Team.

- Pulling invasive plants that are overtaking our native flora
- Planting of native plants/trees
- Restoring areas along a stream, river, marsh or shoreline
- Beach/River/lake clean up
- Harvesting organic fruits/veggies
- Trail building/maintenance
- Restoration of wildlife sites

What are the benefits?

- Meet like-minded people
- Feel good getting your hands dirty and being active in something you believe in
- Educate yourself about natural spaces and the environmental problems they face
- Learn first-hand about work being done in the lower mainland by different environmental groups
- Get the experience of a variety of stewardship activities
- Restore a natural space from a damaged state
- Be trained in stewardship practices
- Explore a nature space you may have never been to before
- Realise the benefits of working together with others
- Get physical exercise
- Have fun!

Learn more at www.meetup.com/The-Lower-Mainland-Green-Team

