In the last issue of our newsletter, “Zero-tolerance Under Scrutiny”, Jane Ursel documented how the criminal justice system has become more involved in domestic violence cases resulting in rising arrest rates. The intent of such policies is to provide greater protection to victims of domestic violence. However, one of the unintended effects has been the phenomenon of dual arrests. This typically happens when a woman calls police because her partner is violent, police respond and while they are taking statements about the incident the husband makes a counter allegation. In most cases (91%) in Winnipeg, police arrest one person. However, in the remaining 9% police respond to the competing claims of abuse by arresting both the man and woman. While this may not seem like a large number, its impact on a woman who called for help can be devastating. Such an experience may prevent a woman from ever calling the police again.

How do we understand these counter allegations? Some women claim their violence was used in self defense. Others claim that they were never violent, that their husbands made a false allegation to confound the system and reduce their chances of being prosecuted (“best defense is a strong offence”). Still others claim that their husband threatened to have them charged if they ‘dared’ to call the police. On the other hand, police claim that it is often very difficult to sort out the truth of the incident in these ‘he says….she says’ cases. If the physical evidence is inconclusive, is there a better way to respond than to arrest both parties? Most people would agree that arresting both the man and the woman in cases of false allegations or self defense is not the best response.

However, how does an officer determine when a counter allegation is valid or not? We cannot rule out the fact that some incidents do involve mutual assaults, even if those cases may be relatively rare. Other jurisdictions that have had to struggle with the same problem have come up with a variety of responses.

In response to the problematic issues that have been voiced relative to dual arrest, several recommendations have been put forward within the province of Manitoba:

Primary aggressor policies are grounded in the assumption that in many cases of mutual allegations, violent incidents involving partners involve aggressors and victims, rather than fighting couples. In this sense, policies which require the police to identify a primary...
The Struggle Against Domestic Violence in China

By Jane Ursel

This past November, about a hundred dedicated women and men from all over China gathered in Beijing to address the issue of domestic violence. They were reporting on their progress after a three year initiative to conduct research, raise awareness and improve practices in the field of domestic violence. This initiative was funded by a number of foreign foundations including the Ford Foundation in the United States and a large foundation in Sweden. The meeting in Beijing on Nov. 15 and 16 entitled “International Conference on Combating Domestic Violence” was the wrap up event of the three year project. I was asked to speak at the conference. It was an inspiring three days of papers and workshops with participants from almost every province in China. The international contingent was relatively small with representation from Canada, USA, Norway, Sweden, India and England. For those of us from outside of China it was a great privilege to participate.

After the opening session we broke into workshops which were organized around three major themes:
1. Theoretical Research
2. Judicial and Administrative Intervention
3. Community and Social Support

I spent my time with the Judicial and Administrative Intervention group. Police officers, lawyers and representatives from the All China Women’s Federation discussed quite candidly their struggles to change police practice and move the courts and judges to a better understanding of the issues involved in domestic violence. I was struck by how similar their concerns were to ours in Canada. Two presentations that moved me deeply were made by Liu Wei and Yu Rong, two of the lawyers who were part of the delegation RESOLVE Manitoba sponsored in 2001. They are both Legal Aid lawyers associated with the Women’s Legal Studies Centre at Peking University.

Liu Wei is the first lawyer in China to introduce the battered wife defense in a murder case and she successfully defended a woman sentenced to death for killing her abusive husband. Liu Wei first learned about the defense on her trip to Winnipeg in 2001. When she returned to China, she was able to get more information on the issue from a colleague, Chen Min, who had studied law in Vancouver. Liu Wei spoke of the role of the China Women’s Federation advocating on behalf of this woman and the appeal made by the woman’s mother desperate to save her daughter’s life. In a compelling presentation, she talked of the challenge of introducing a foreign defense into the Chinese legal setting. Clearly she did a very good job! Already other requests have been made to lawyers in Beijing to defend other women who resort to violence to end their abuse.

A second presentation by Yu Rong reminded me of how resourceful dedicated people can be. Yu Rong drew...
The Struggle Against Domestic Violence in China
...(cont’d from page 2)

upon her 30 years experience as a judge to advise on the use of existing laws to better protect women. She recounted an amazing story of how she was able to get an abusive husband to justice despite the lack of interest and intervention by the police. She was called to a home in which a husband had very badly burnt his wife, but the local authorities were not responding. Yu Rong used her connections as a former judge to get a forensic doctor on site to examine the woman, while Yu Rong had pictures taken of the crime scene. The doctor’s report and the pictures were sufficient to get a conviction without the wife having to testify. Not only was the case inspiring, Yu Rong is an example of the outstanding commitment people have to this issue. After 30 years as a judge, Yu Rong is spending her ‘retirement’ as a volunteer lawyer for Legal Aid.

Sometimes it is possible to be cynical about the usefulness of international exchanges; it is also very easy to become cynical about legal reform. Hearing Liu Wei’s presentation reminded me that women’s lives are literally “at stake” and everything that we can do locally and globally is important. I came away from the conference with competing emotions. On the one hand, it is so discouraging to be reminded of the universal nature of wife abuse and to know that in many countries there are such limited resources to help these women. On the other hand, as I listened to the many compelling stories told by police, lawyers and advocates from all over China I was buoyed up and inspired by the creative efforts of women and men committed to righting this historic wrong.

“Domestic violence is a serious violation of the human rights of women. The law is the most powerful backup force in safeguarding women’s rights and interests, and strict enforcement is the crux to prevention of domestic violence”

Yu Rong, Beijing Nov. 2002
Much of the work of the RESOLVE tri-provincial network is grounded in the concerns of individuals, groups and community service providers who are dealing with issues of violence and abuse. It is therefore important to employ research approaches and methods that are designed to bring together multiple “collaborators” in the research process.

The Canadian Institute for the Advancement of Women produces a small volume entitled, Participatory Research and Action: A Guide to Becoming a Researcher for Social Change (Morris & Muzychka, 2002). This guide is built on the successful research, communication and action strategies identified by feminists, Aboriginal, anti-racist, lesbian, disability-rights, health, literacy and other progressive community and academic researchers across Canada.

Clearly written and practical, this account demonstrates how to conduct progressive, action-oriented research within both mainstream and marginalized communities. This volume also addresses how to effectively communicate research results and act on research recommendations for positive social change. Issues ranging from decolonizing methodologies, researcher identity, ethics, collaboration and empowerment, and communication are discussed, and meaningful examples of research are offered throughout the manual.

So, what is participatory action research (PAR)? In true participatory research, research participants are involved in all research-related activities. For example, participants decide the research objective(s), question(s) and methodology. They are also involved in data collection, analysis, and reporting, as well as making decisions on the uses or applications of the research findings. In action research, the focus is on social change, often with a special action or actions as the goal. Therefore, PAR is research in which research participants are ideally involved and in control at every stage of the research, with the goal of taking action on the research findings for positive social change.

An important aim of PAR is to leave participants immediately better off, as well as helping the community reach longer-term goals for improving circumstances for affected individuals. Often, the research process itself can be a transforming act for those who participate.

RESOLVE Saskatchewan, through its research and educational endeavors, strives to meet the challenges, ideals and opportunities of PAR. Research makes a difference! Even small projects can have a substantial positive impact on the lives of individuals living with violence and abuse.

RESOLVE Saskatchewan Update

- **CURA Project** In collaboration with the Domestic Abuse Outreach Program in Saskatoon (Family Support Center, Division of Social Services), research interviews focusing on women’s experience with the justice system are now in-process.

- **“High Risk” Youth Project** Team-building for a potential longitudinal research project focusing on youth at risk of violence and abuse, is occurring between Child and Youth Mental Health (SDH), Saskatoon East School Division, and researchers from various departments at the University of Saskatchewan.

- **Secondary Traumatic Stress** Dr. Stephanie Martin has been awarded a research grant from the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women to conduct a study entitled: Helping the Helpers: Exploring Solutions to Secondary Traumatic Stress. Participants are being recruited and results will be posted in future newsletters.
Congratulations to Kendra and Calvin on the birth of their son, Nathaniel Clark Shewchuk, who was born on December 2, 2002. Kendra Nixon, our Community Research Development Coordinator, has taken a maternity leave for the year. She has been with RESOLVE Alberta for the past three years. Both mom and baby are healthy and doing well.

During Kendra’s maternity leave, I will be taking on her responsibilities for RESOLVE Alberta. I bring over 2 1/2 years of experience working in the field of domestic violence, and am pursuing an MSW degree on a part-time basis at the University of Calgary. I look forward to continuing to learn about RESOLVE, and to work towards achieving its goals.

Update on Projects

Safe Visitation Project: Funding has just been received for the Safe Custody Visitation Centre Evaluation in response to a proposal written by Gaye Warthe, Carolyn Goard and Dr. Leslie Tutty. The Calgary Foundation is providing a munificent grant of $14,500 to fund this project over the next 18 months. The YWCA Family Violence Prevention Centre and Sheriff King Home is working in partnership with RESOLVE Alberta to evaluate Safe Visitation.

Domestic violence service providers in Calgary have long recognized the need for a supervised visitation and access program. While visitation and exchange programs are becoming relatively common in centres throughout North America, Australia and Britain, no comprehensive evaluations have been published. Given the potential risks to the safety of these children and their families, it is critical to ensure that the program is working as anticipated: allowing appropriate, non-traumatic access and exchange for all family members. For more information about the project, please contact Carolyn Goard, the Director of the YWCA Family Violence Prevention Centre & Sheriff King Home at 403.294.3660 or the RESOLVE Alberta office at 403.220.8634 or resolve@ucalgary.ca.

Website: The Calgary Foundation has kindly given us $6,150.00 to be used to develop a website for RESOLVE Alberta. With this website, information about research on violence and abuse can be shared amongst researchers, students and community members across the province. Specifically, the website will make available project updates and research results specific to RESOLVE Alberta. In addition, a list of research reports and publications from the RESOLVE tri-prairie network will be provided so visitors are aware of the comprehensive work that the Network has been involved in. We will also provide links to other research centres across Canada and internationally, in addition to information about local community events and initiatives, and upcoming conferences and workshops related to violence and abuse. We’ll update you on the progress of the website, and let you know when it is up and running.

PMS and Parenting Study: RESOLVE Alberta received a generous grant of $5,000 from the Institute for Gender Research (University of Calgary). For many women, a significant activity of daily living is parenting. Research has linked PMS with irritability and problems with sociability and anxiety, suggesting the possible impact of symptoms on family relationships. The study focuses on the population of mothers who have PMS symptoms to understand their coping skills, the life-stage of child-bearing and rearing, and quality of life. This project is a collaborative initiative between Lynn Barry, Calgary Rocky View Child and Family Services and the Canadian Society of the Investigation of Child Abuse. We have not yet heard from CIHR regarding funding for the PMS and Parenting Study, but we will be forwarding additional grant applications. Interviews for the PMS and Parenting research are underway. For more information about the project, please contact the RESOLVE Alberta office.
aggressor, acknowledge that partners often are not engaging in mutual violence, and recognize that one individual may more appropriately be considered the perpetrator.

It is important to keep in mind, however, that ‘primary aggressor’ is not the same as ‘first to use violence’ as individuals may engage in violence as self-protective behaviours stemming from perceived threats that emerge as a result of having experienced violence in the past. The complexities involved have been considered, for instance, by the State of New York, which has implemented a policy that directs officers to identify the primary aggressor in domestic violence cases on the basis of the extent of injuries, whether any person is threatening or has threatened future harm against another party or family or household member, a person’s history of domestic violence that the officer can ascertain and whether any person acted defensively to protect oneself from injury.

- Specialized training for police regarding appropriate action in such cases. The assumption behind police training is that the police, as first responders, must be trained and prepared to deal with the nature of domestic cases, as well as to understand the complex variety of motivations behind women’s use of violence in such situations and related to this, the context within which that violence occurs. Specialized training could assist officers in determining who the primary aggressor is in instances where they are called to respond to domestic violence.

- Considering the appropriateness of rehabilitative remands in cases that do appear to involve legitimate counter allegation and that proceed to court. Some cases involving dual arrest (any many involving domestic violence) result in a ‘stay for counseling’. However, the weakness with this current approach lies in its failure to articulate what constitutes appropriate counseling. This is not to suggest that no individuals receive appropriate counseling; however, there is at present no mechanism for ensuring quality. Rehabilitative remands could work towards the standardization of counseling for those who have used violence in intimate relationships, and the development of closer connections in a network of service providers. At the same time, respect for victims’ decisions to not testify could be maintained.

- Crown Attorney Review. When counter allegations have been made, police could be advised to take the particulars on both claims of abuse, arrest one person (the one deemed most likely to be the primary aggressor) and submit the other complaint to the crown attorney for opinion. The crown prosecutor could then review all of the evidence to determine whether there are grounds for a second arrest.

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**Manitoba Update**

*The Aboriginal Health & Wellness Center’s Women’s Healing Program:* Since April 2002, the Women’s Healing Program, established to help women cope effectively with anger and violence, has been active in all of its three components (outreach, open group and individual counseling). As of January 2003, the outreach component has made 34 community based presentations, with a total attendance of 320 individuals. In addition, 72 women from the community have been served through outreach. The open group is currently in its third run and has served 39 women. Each group program contains 19 sessions and two retreats. As the program progresses, more women are consistently attending group sessions. Individual counseling, either by facilitators or the Elder has been accessed by 43 women. A community resource committee has been formed to assist in referrals and outreach.
Announcements

Congratulations to Tracie Olfrey who received the 2002 Carolyn Boivin Bursary for graduate research in the area of family violence. Tracie’s research for her Masters of Science Degree (Department of Family Studies) involved analysis of data from Canada’s National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth to test for risk markers which lead to child abuse. Tracie is the third recipient of the bursary, developed in honour of the PrairieAction Foundation’s first president, Carolyn Boivin. This bursary attracts applications from graduate students in a wide field of study. Our first recipient was Lisa Murdock (2000), conducting research for her Masters in Sociology on Aboriginal Women, Anger and Violence and our second recipient, Christine Kreklewitz (2001), conducted her PhD (Interdisciplinary Studies) research on the impact of childhood incest victimization on parenting. RESOLVE Manitoba is pleased to acknowledge the impressive research undertaken by students at our university. Our call for applications for 2003 will be out soon. For further information call 204.474.9533.

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Conferences

April 3 - 5, 2003 “Violence and Health 2003”, The Coast and Plaza Hotel and Suites, Vancouver, BC. The purpose of this conference is to provide an interdisciplinary forum to explore the health care needs of sexual assault survivors, women experiencing violence in intimate relationships and children who have experienced abuse. Contact the organizers for further information: UBC Interprofessional Continuing Education tel: 604.822.4965; fax: 604.822.4835; e-mail: interprof@cehs.ubc.ca online: www.interprofessional.ubc.ca


May 12 - 16, 2003 “Child Health 2003”, 3rd World Congress & Exposition, Vancouver, British Columbia. For more information, contact Venue West Conference Services Ltd. by phone: 604.681.5226; fax: 604.681.2503; or e-mail: congress@venuewest.com

May 21, 2003 Manitoba Association of Family Violence Workers, Brown Bag Lunch Series panel discussion: “Children & Youth Affected by Family Violence: What are we doing and what do we need to do?”. Time: 11:30 - 1:00 P.M. at the Union Center, Rm. 103, 275 Broadway, Winnipeg, MB. For further information phone: 784.4206, fax: 772-2998, or website: http://www.mafvw.ca Admission is free.

June 21 - 26, 2003 Second World Congress on Family Violence in Prague, Czech Republic. Sponsored by the National Council on Child Abuse and Family Violence (USA). For more information, contact the National Council on Child Abuse and Family Violence by phone: 202.429.6695; e-mail: nccavf@aol.com or web site: www.nccavf.org

July 13 - July 16, 2003 8th International Family Violence Research Conference, Sheraton Harborside Hotel and Conference Center, Portsmouth, New Hampshire. For more information phone: 603.832.0767; fax: 603.862.1122; e-mail: sarahg@cisunix.unh.edu; online: www.unh.edu/frl/conference2003/index.html
Celebrating in Winnipeg!

Another pleasant event for Prairieaction Foundation took place on November 21, 2002, when our Manitoba friends and donors joined us to celebrate our Founders’ Campaign success. It was a particularly happy occasion for us, as we joined with RESOLVE to celebrate their 10 year anniversary. The event was held at the University of Manitoba, which was appropriate since the University has been the home to the RESOLVE network and its predecessor, the Manitoba Research Centre for Family Violence and Violence Against Women since its inception in 1992. We thank the University for its generous sponsorship this event and for its constant support on behalf of both Prairieaction Foundation and RESOLVE. We were delighted again to have a number of special guests join us, including the Honourable Diane McGifford, representing the provincial government.

Our next donor event will take place on February 13 in Regina, where we are delighted to partner with the RCMP. We know it was be just as successful as our Winnipeg and Calgary events.

2002 Annual Report

Once again this year we have made our Annual Report available to you on our website at www.prairieactionfoundation.ca. It was another busy and successful year for PAF as we completed our Founders’ Campaign. This past year also saw our fundraising efforts move in a slightly different direction. We held our inaugural Golf Marathon in August of 2002 in Spruce Grove, near Edmonton. We are delighted to report that through the fundraising efforts of our Marathon golfers (who golfed an average of 100 holes in one day!), we raised an astonishing $64,000! Thank you to all who made this event such a great success in its first year!

Our support for RESOLVE has grown each and every year, and this year was no exception. In fact, we were able to double our grant to RESOLVE from last year. The tri-provincial network received $135,000 from PAF this year, and we are once again proud and impressed with their work.

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