

# WENLIDO W.E.S.T.

WOMEN EDUCATING IN SELF-DEFENSE TRAINING

Summer Newsletter

August 2018

## ABOUT

We are a not-for-profit group of women teaching self-defense to women and their children in British Columbia since 1976.

In addition to teaching a 12 hour Basic Wenlido course, we do speaking engagements, provide Continuing Wenlido self-defense training, Instructor Training and a support system for women in self-defense.

by Gaye Ferguson



I've been lucky to teach a number of classes to interesting groups, alongside our regular community-based classes. Here's a couple that stood out for me over the past while.

The **Moving Ahead** program in Coquitlam works with newcomer and refugee groups, including families. I was invited to teach a workshop for one such program that ran a young women's support group. I was a bit nervous, because it can be challenging going into a group of teenagers to teach. My first task was to get them all off their smart phones, and then turn off the hip hop music playing on the smart board in the room! Once we got going, they were so lively and excited, not guarded at all (which was my fear). We sat down at the end to have a discussion and I was saddened to hear their stories of being harassed and threatened AFTER their arrival in Canada. None mentioned anything about violence in the countries that they fled from - just here! One of them, who had to have her older sister interpret, revealed for the first time a stalking situation that was currently happening. In confidence, I told the facilitator and mentioned some resources she might find helpful to pass on.

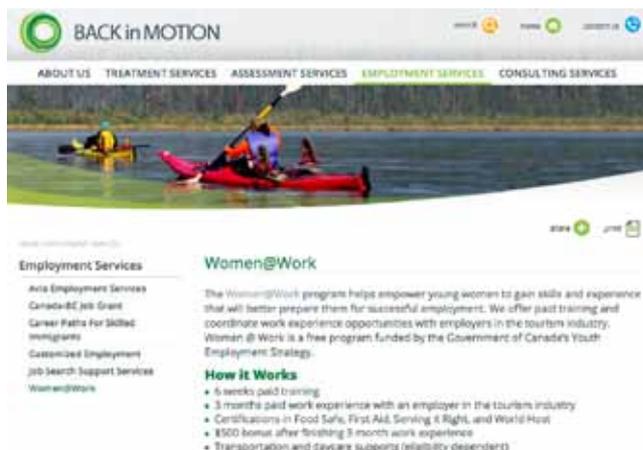
## INSTRUCTOR HIGHLIGHTS: by Gaye

## CONTENTS

- PAGE 1**      **Moving Ahead Program in Coquitlam (Gaye)**
- PAGE 2**      **Women at Work and Changing Gears programs (Gaye)**
- PAGE 3**      ***Precipice*: drawing and artist statement (Diane)**
- PAGE 4**      **Upcoming Classes**



Another program both Jennifer and I have been teaching regularly for over a year is a job re-entry program called **Women at Work** that helps women transition into jobs in the tourism and hospitality industry. We've gone in for each cohort of trainees, in both their Vancouver and Coquitlam locations, to run a 2 hour workshop. The women come from varied backgrounds, including immigrant and Indigenous. Some of the groups have been super eager and open, others less so, perhaps coming from more difficult life experiences. We always work with the energy and needs of each group and try to give them skills that can support them in their future.



For more information on this program, click on: <http://back-inmotion.com/employment-services/womenatwork>

Finally, there is the YWCA's unique program **Changing Gears** that we've taught at several times now. It is a 23-week training that prepares women for the trucking industry. These women are invariably highly motivated, have had lots of interesting life experiences and are readying themselves to enter a tough, male-dominated field. The YWCA recently asked for a letter of support for their application to renew funding, which I was happy to provide. They are considering offering the women our full, 2-day program if they get the funding.

For more information on this program, click on: <https://ywcavan.org/programs/employment-programs-services/changing-gears>



"Precipice", graphite pencil on mylar,  
17" x 11", D. Jacobs, 2018 ©



My artwork is generated from an unplanned, intuitive place, influenced during production by music, and often including the automatic writing of random thoughts, feelings and insights. There is recurring imagery of a vulnerably nude female figure, surrounded by and often overwhelmed by various aspects of chaos. The woman depicted here stands many limbed, reminiscent of Durga, all powerful Hindu goddess of destruction. She appears to be simultaneously greeting

and morphing with a tentacled, bulbous, writhing mass that could be an invading external entity, or symbolic of inner states of being. The human figure also appears to be warding off the viewer from looking at and perhaps judging her situation. She stands waiting ready with a sharp sword held slightly cocked at her side. If and where she plans to strike is unclear. She wears sturdy gladiator sandals, created to stride warriorlike across the planet, yet also a transparent body stocking common in sex shops, and scanty underwear that remind me of Ripley in the final battle scene from the film *Alien*. Those tiny panties created a more powerful feeling of vulnerability in the movie scene, but I remember also deeply resenting what I felt to be the gratuitous sexualization of the brave, intelligent, capable female character at the time. Would they have stripped down a male protagonist in the same way? Perhaps; the role was originally written as a male character, and the choice to cast Sigourney Weaver was groundbreaking and deeply influential as the first well paid female action heroine. The woman in the drawing also wears an oversized Elizabethan neck ruff, which makes me think of elite courtiers and sophisticated nobility. She is an enigmatic presence that also has to me a slight jester resonance about it. An apple floats within biting distance, the biblical symbol of knowledge and loss of innocence ready to be plucked from thin air.

From a self defense POV, this work addresses (for myself at least, as viewing art is after all a very subjective interaction that the audience member projects their own life experience into) the inner programming women receive, from their family of origin and from society at large, about how they view themselves, what they value or do not in themselves, what inherent capacities they possess, and how their inner wisdom, instincts, perhaps their genetic memories, are shaped or distorted to enhance or sabotage their ability to live and act on their own behalf in the outside world. Wow, that was all one sentence.

The alien creature could generally represent all the different forms of violence women are exposed to, from physical to psychological to spiritual. The understanding that these different types of violence can and do happen to even the most well prepared and privileged individual is deeply sobering. One way of directly linking that concept back to the imagery in the drawing is to consider the very popular Japanese pornographic animations depicting the tentacle rape of young women, often whom are elite trained warriors or superheroes.

To expand on the concept of the court jester: the jester is the only one who by tradition can speak the truth through comedy, revealing the follies of the ruler to be laughed at, considered and possibly corrected, and yet not directly suffer the king's wrath. This is a powerful role that many different kinds of artists play in society, from comedians to dancers, painters to writers, musicians to film makers. They do, however, still occasionally suffer the wrath of fascist governments, abusive spouses, or crazed fans. There is no cure for violence, and nobody, the most vulnerable or the most powerful, is fully immune to its effects. Mussolini was lynched in his courtyard. Kennedy was shot in a televised parade. Stalin was skewered on a pitchfork in Mexico. Gandhi was knifed in a peaceful gathering.

PRECIPICE: drawing & artist statement

by Diane

# WENLIDO W.E.S.T.

WOMEN EDUCATING IN SELF-DEFENSE TRAINING

Summer Newsletter

August 2018

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

**JUNE 15<sup>th</sup>** is **World Elder Abuse Awareness Day**. Wenlido has offered self-defense classes for seniors since we began more than three decades ago. It is important for people of all ages to practise our five A's. You can do physical action to defend yourself, no matter what your physical abilities are.

Information from the **United Nation's website** (<http://www.un.org/en/events/elderabuse/>):

"Elder abuse is a global social issue which affects the health and human rights of millions of older persons around the world, and an issue which deserves the attention of the international community. The United Nations General Assembly, in its resolution 66/127, designated June 15 as World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. It represents the one day in the year when the whole world voices its opposition to the abuse and suffering inflicted to some of our older generations.

**Key facts:**

- Around 1 in 6 older people experienced some form of abuse in the past year.
- Rates of abuse may be higher for older people living in institutions than in the community.
- Elder abuse can lead to serious physical injuries and long-term psychological consequences.
- Elder abuse is predicted to increase as many countries are experiencing rapidly ageing populations.
- The global population of people aged 60 years and older will more than double, from 900 million in 2015 to about 2 billion in 2050."

**Video links:**

<http://www.un.org/en/events/elderabuse/videos.shtml>

## Douglas College Class at New Westminster Campus

700 Royal Avenue, New Westminister (room TBA)

**Saturday, September 29, 2018**

**9:30 am - 4:00 pm** (no cost for Douglas students)

Event Brite is not yet set up, so please call the Wenlido number to register or email (refer to the bottom of this page for contact info).

## Ongoing Continuing Strength Class

The last Sunday of every month, Wenlido runs a 2-hour continuing strength class. This class features 2 hours of review and new learnings for those that have taken any level of Wenlido at any point in the past. This class takes place at Templeton Park Pool (700 Templeton Drive, Vancouver) from 2 - 4pm, and the drop-in fee is \$12.

Upcoming Classes