Real bodies are not photoshopped

By AYESHA ALI

Should the promotion of anorexia through the use of websites be criminalised? This was the question at the heart of the French documentary Arresting Anna which followed the life of Sarah – an anorexic and Pro-Ana (short for pro-anorexia) blogger. The documentary, shown at Cinema Politica Fredericton on February 10th, also depicted the attempt of passionate legislators, Valerie Boyer, to render the promotion of eating disorders illegal in France by punishing or firing magazines, blogs and websites that present extreme thinness as an ideal beauty trait.

According to the director of the 26-minute film, Lucie Schwarts, the goal of directing and producing such a documentary was to give the authors of Pro-Ana blogs a face and an opportunity to explain why they do what they do. Arresting Anna made for some uncomfortable viewing by highlighting disturbing and potentially dangerous information available on those websites as well as the extreme isolation and need for support experienced by individuals during the early stages of anorexia. The documentary explained why those who have eating disorders may turn to an online sanctuary, away from the surveillance of people whom they know, a place where they are able to say what they are not able or ready to express to family, friends or medical professionals.

Arresting Anna did not solely focus on Pro-Ana blogs but the question of liberty and freedom of speech. The documentary provoked a discussion among the viewers at Cinema Politica as to whether or not it is plausible to legislate online content and potentially criminalise those with a psychiatric illness. One of the central themes of the group discussion was, “At what point does expressing yourself become dangerous for someone else?”

In a study of 235 female undergraduates conducted by the University of Missouri, it was discovered that participants who were exposed to a Pro-Ana website for 25 minutes (as opposed to a website on home decor and another website on fashion) but with the body images displayed also significantly lower self esteem, lower belief in their own competence and perceived themselves as heavier. Additionally, the participants who were exposed to the Pro-Ana website reported a greater likelihood of exercising without a thought and thinking about looking thin.

Clearly, the findings of this study are worrying, however, when one reads Pro-Ana websites, what struck me was that many of the images of thinness found on these sites are mainstream images of celebrities and fashion models such as Kate Moss, Nicole Richie and Mary Kate Olsen. If these particular celebrities were not familiar to us, it would be extremely difficult to make a connection with compulsive eating disorders (the problem is unknown) and the images of bodies that are considered “normal” in popular culture. This highlights the glaringly contradictory messages that women of all ages are receiving about what constitutes a healthy body.

Anorexia is a serious and often prevalent in society, there is still stigma and shame surrounding eating disorders, particularly when it comes to men. There are some men who suffer from what is often labeled as a “girl’s problem” or “self-inflicted”. This can easily result in these men not seeking help or support and misconceptions surrounding them. Only through dialogue can we even begin to understand the challenges of eating disorders and work towards making it “safer” for individuals to reach out for support that they need.

Servers like Yahoo and Google do shut down Pro-Ana sites, but such an approach targets the consequences of anorexia rather than the root cause of the problem. A campaign that is in its early stages of development. It is estimated that 30% of individuals with Anorexia Nervosa will continue to have an eating disorder for the rest of their lives. It is estimated that 10% of individuals with Anorexia Nervosa will die by suicide.

Community Calendar

For details and updates, please visit nbmembiego.org.

No More Blood: The Struggle for Peace and Human Rights

Meet the human rights defenders who will visit five Canadian cities to tell their stories about their efforts to protect rights and dignity in Mexico and their journey to peace. Sponsored by Tucuman Human Rights Centre and works with indigenous communities in Guerrero State; Dolores Gonzalez Soravia is director of SERAPAZ that works on combating violence and femicide in Chiapas; Yolanda Moran Isaas is a member of FUENDEM, an organisation supported by families whose relatives have been disappeared; Alberto Ixcocohtzin Carrasco is althoughnotadisorder is Lighter Matter in Sathlin, Coahuila, recipient of last year’s prestigious Leitler Moffitt Human Rights Award for their work with migrants. Many of these human rights defenders are fighting for their lives.

The event is on Tuesday, March 13th 4:30-6:30 pm at Carleton Hall, Room 130, UNB Fredericton. Contact: Hispania Munoz at hmsarthe@unb.ca

International Women’s Day Coffeehouse with Norma Hasen Crabbe

Norma Crabbe will talk about her work as an American journalist who has lived in Latin America for 40 years. The event will also include a short film presentation of Freedom to Marry: The Marriage Equality Movement. The film covers the recent US Supreme Court decision legalizing same-sex marriage and the fight for marriage equality around the world. The event is co-sponsored by the Silence Network, Supported by the Freder顿on Chapter of the Canadian Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights, UNB’s Peace Coalition and UNB Women’s Studies. Contact: info@freedomonfreedompeace.org

Politicized documentaries take us to places like Afghanistan, Palestine, journalism. There is a history of political and economic exploitation and destruction wreaked by capitalism and colonialism that warrants our examination, analysis and action. In Fredereton at the Conserve House, 180 Saint John Street, in Sackville, the event will be held in the McEwan Room at Alma University, Cinema Politica also exists in Sackville, Bathurst, Moncton, Taymouth and Saint John.

Check out film schedules here: www.cinemapolitica.org

Fredericton airport workers have been on strike since Feb. 13th. Contrary to Airport Authority claims, the workers have said that it is imperative that this strike will not disrupt airport operations and access to the airport. The public and all unionized workers alike have been warning the airport from the very beginning, it is indeed evident that this strike will disrupt airport operations and access to the airport. The public and all unionized workers alike have been warning the airport from the very beginning, it is indeed evident that this strike will disrupt airport operations and access to the airport.

Temporary foreign workers (continued from page 1) and use less labor (Carols Taylor, Toronto Star, July 20, 2009). Migrant workers who are not able to get an offer of employment in Canada sometimes have no other choice but to come to the country as an undocumented worker, which is a very precarious route. Huesca notes that the route of immigration through economic need is not currently available in Canada.

Besides entering Canada as a worker, entrepreneur or student who contributes to Canadian corporate and state coffers, immigrants can also gain entry in a program that reunites them with family members with status in Canada or as political refugees. However, according to the immigrant justice group, No One is Illegal, the Canadian government is reducing family class immigration by 15 percent, which is estimated to reduce the number of spouses and children immigrating to Canada by 4,000 per year. Immigrant rights advocates blast these increasing restrictions being placed on these programs by the Harper government. They say that Canada is inhumely closing its borders and deporting people who are seeking escape from torture and murder because of political repression in their home countries.

Huesca says that while people are driven to migrate by the lack of food or clean water, those people are not legitimate reasons to be granted sanctuary in Canada.

Membership Options

- $3/month
- $10/month
- $25/month

- $10/year
- $25/year
- $50/year

Other

I would like to be a member, but I cannot be a sustainer at this time.

Payment Options

- cash
- please send me an application form to establish monthly pre-authorized payments from my bank account.

Please mail application forms and cheques to the NB Media Co-op at 180 St. John Street, Fredericton, NB E3B 4A9. Thank you!

About 55,000 students marched across Quebec against tuition increases in February. A Quebec-wide student strike in 1996 led to an almost decade-long freeze on tuition hikes in Quebec. A 2005 strike forced the Jean Charest Liberal government to lower tuition fees. The student strike is a protest against the government's bursaries to students. Photo by Paul-Émile Auger.

Help build democratic media in New Brunswick! Support our annual fee and ideas photos to info@mbmedia.coop.

visit nbmembiego.coop!

- union printed on recycled paper -

In Brief...

- The government of NB has decided to raise the minimum wage to two dollars above the minimum wage to implement a two-tiered minimum wage. The Alward government announced that it would go ahead with increasing the provincial minimum wage rate by 50¢ on April 1st, bringing minimum wage rates to $10/hour. “Let’s hope that the government takes a similar approach when it comes to the provincial budget,” Sande Harding, First Vice-President of the NB Federation of Labour.

- They’re back! Attawapiskat, a First Nations community facing a severe housing crisis, called for revenue sharing with the nearby De Beers diamond mine located near James Bay. “Gold and riches are being taken from our land for the benefit of a few... Our lands have been stripped of us and yet we are charged with our band tax. The forest, timber, hydro and mining have created unlimited wealth for non-native chief people and their governments,” said Attawapiskat Chief Theresa Spence.

In Brief...

- The government of NB has decided to raise the minimum wage to two dollars above the minimum wage to implement a two-tiered minimum wage. The Alward government announced that it would go ahead with increasing the provincial minimum wage rate by 50¢ on April 1st, bringing minimum wage rates to $10/hour. “Let’s hope that the government takes a similar approach when it comes to the provincial budget,” Sande Harding, First Vice-President of the NB Federation of Labour.

- They’re back! Attawapiskat, a First Nations community facing a severe housing crisis, called for revenue sharing with the nearby De Beers diamond mine located near James Bay. “Gold and riches are being taken from our land for the benefit of a few... Our lands have been stripped of us and yet we are charged with our band tax. The forest, timber, hydro and mining have created unlimited wealth for non-native chief people and their governments,” said Attawapiskat Chief Theresa Spence.

Temporary foreign workers (continued from page 1) and use less labor (Carols Taylor, Toronto Star, July 20, 2009). Migrant workers who are not able to get an offer of employment in Canada sometimes have no other choice but to come to the country as an undocumented worker, which is a very precarious route. Huesca notes that the route of immigration through economic need is not currently available in Canada.

Besides entering Canada as a worker, entrepreneur or student who contributes to Canadian corporate and state coffers, immigrants can also gain entry in a program that reunites them with family members with status in Canada or as political refugees. However, according to the immigrant justice group, No One is Illegal, the Canadian government is reducing family class immigration by 15 percent, which is estimated to reduce the number of spouses and children immigrating to Canada by 4,000 per year. Immigrant rights advocates blast these increasing restrictions being placed on these programs by the Harper government. They say that Canada is inhumely closing its borders and deporting people who are seeking escape from torture and murder because of political repression in their home countries.

Huesca says that while people are driven to migrate by the lack of food or clean water, those people are not legitimate reasons to be granted sanctuary in Canada.