

**Broadcaster Jas  
Johal decamps  
for India**

- Page 24

**Vision Vancouver  
courts Asian  
vote**

- Page 25



**Canada's award winning independent newspaper**

# Asian

P a c i f i c P o s t

“

*The man who  
has no  
imagination  
has no wings.*

”

- Muhammad Ali

August 28 - September 3, 2008

Sales & Enquiries: 604-821-1954

[www.asianpacificpost.com](http://www.asianpacificpost.com)

## Let's talk about it . . .



**BC lawyers group shines spotlight on domestic  
violence with new Asian outreach programs - Page 8**

**EDITORIAL**

**Hidden apartheid or hidden apathy**

- Page 26





# BC lawyers go behind the cultural curtain

A new public outreach program exposes domestic violence for non-English speaking victims

By Lucy-Claire Saunders

Abuse can take all sorts of shapes. It can come in all types and forms. It can look different depending on who you are and where you're from. And when it happens behind closed doors, it becomes much easier to deny.

Dealing with domestic violence — being able to talk about it and take action when it occurs — is difficult no matter who the victim is. And when the victim is not in his or her home country, and perhaps does not speak fluent English, the task of taking charge can often seem insurmountable.

But it doesn't have to be. With the right education brought to Vancouver's ethnic communities by experts who speak the victim's language, the cycle of violence can be stopped dead in its tracks.

And that is just what the People's Law School has done. In the most recent, comprehensive attempt to address domestic violence within minority groups, the Vancouver-based non-profit society is embarking on a three-year, public outreach program called the Violence Against Minority Women Project.

As well as hosting workshops throughout Metro Vancouver and Vancouver Island, the People's Law School is producing *Talking About Abuse: How Much do you Know*

*About Violence Aimed at Women?*, a three-part TV and radio series designed to help women and men who speak languages other than English understand how Canada defines domestic violence what resources and rights victims are entitled to.

The seven television programs and nine radio broadcasts will be produced in Cantonese, Vietnamese and Korean, among many other languages, over the next three years beginning in September. (See below for details).

For victims who are not from Canada, getting out of a violent home involves navigating a complex web of laws and procedures, made even more difficult by the fact that they are not fluent in English.

"A Canadian knows how to work the system to his or her advantage," says Jenny Lau, a victims' advocate at the Multicultural Family Support Services Centre and a guest speaker on the public outreach TV series. "Whereas a new immigrant might not completely understand what

is or is not expected."

Language and cultural difference create additional barriers for victims trying to get out of an abusive relationship. Chinese traditional values often shape the response of the victim, pressuring a wife or mother, for

sor.

But that's not true.

"The sponsored person/new immigrant has a right to leave or end the relationship with a sponsor who has or is physically, mentally or emotionally abusing, intimidating, scaring or threatening

*"Victims within the Asian-Canadian community do not always understand how the law works, depending on how long they have been in the country."*

instance, to stay with the abuser if it means keeping the family together, according to Lau, who speaks Cantonese and has been working with Asian-Canadian victims for over three years.

Values, finances and immigration policies often keep a victim with the abuser. Sponsored immigrants — who have been granted permanent residency to Canada because an eligible family member has agreed to support that person for three to 10 years — are often under the false belief that they cannot leave their spon-

them," says Phebe Chan, a Chinese-Canadian-born immigration lawyer and guest speaker on the Fairchild program. "In fact, I suggest that they call the police or 911 for help."

Talking to someone about the abuse is the first step, according to experts. Keeping domestic violence a secret can increase the chances of inaction. After all, denial is easier when the truth is kept a secret.

Cpl. Gary Law, who has worked with the RCMP for over 13 years and has dealt with domestic vio-

lence on a regular basis, urges victims to come forward whether it be to a friend or the police.

"Victims within the Asian-Canadian community do not always understand how the law works, depending on how long they have been in the country," he said. "But it's important to stand up and say something."

Law's biggest frustration comes when the police are called by a victim to stop domestic abuse but then are stopped from following through on an arrest — by the victim him or herself.

"Sometimes a victim will call because she is scared but then when we come to arrest the person, she says, 'No, no. Don't arrest my boyfriend. I don't want you to charge him.' But if we let him go, for sure we'll be back."

Although the cycle of violence depends on a number of factors, it is a very tough process to stop.

Public education is an advocates most lethal weapon and that is partly why the People's Law Foundation was able to secure funding from the Law Foundation of B.C., says Wayne Robertson, executive director of the Foundation.

The non-profit foundation generally funds about 100 public policy projects in any given year out of approximately 200 applicants, Robertson added.

Over time, members of the Canadian-Asian community are realizing that falling victim to domestic violence is nothing to be ashamed of, says Lau, and it will only continue to get better if education is made a top priority.

"The violence will keep escalating if it is not exposed," she said. "Becoming aware of the issue and acting when the time is right are two separate challenges, the latter of which, still needs vast improvements within the Asian community."

## Violence in Numbers

8	Times women are more likely than men to experience violence in relationships
653,000	Number of women that had been physically or sexually assaulted in 2004
1 to 2	Women who are murdered per week in Canada by a partner or ex-partner
21	Percentage of women abused by a marital partner during pregnancy
73	Percentage of spousal assault incidents cleared by charge
23	Percentage of non-spousal assault incidents cleared by charge
40	Percentage of women assaulted who said their children witnessed the violence

## Media listings for 2008

### Television

**Fairchild Channel**  
Sept. 28 at 6 p.m.  
Oct. 5 at 6 p.m.  
Oct. 10 at 6:30 p.m.

### Radio

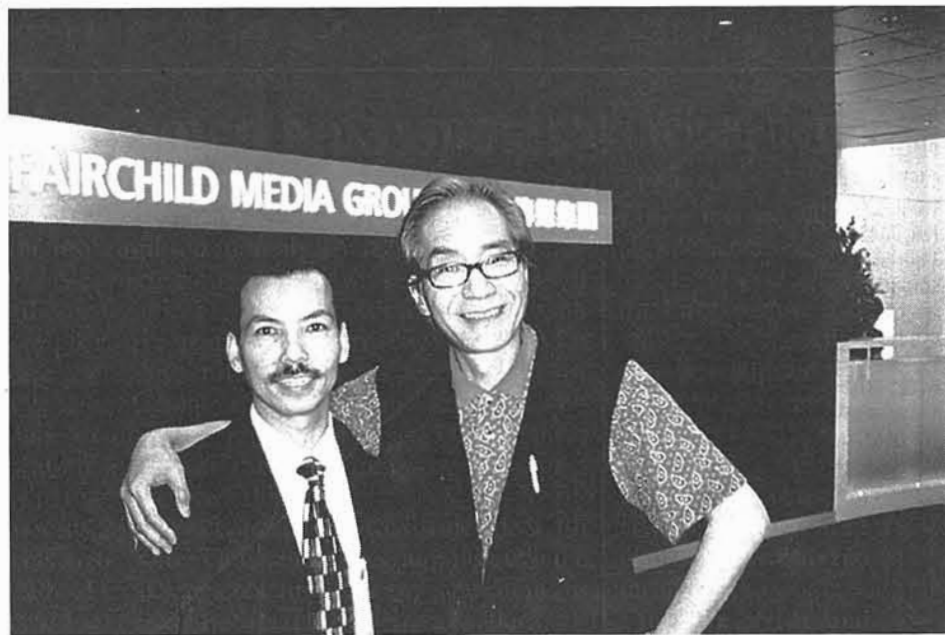
**Cantonese**  
CHMB 1320 AM: Every Thursday in Sept. at 11 a.m.

**Spanish**  
Vancouver Co-op Radio 102.7 FM: Every Thursday in Sept. at 9 a.m.

**Farsi**  
Paivand Media Group 1200 AM: Sept. 14, 21 & 28 at 7 p.m.



(From left to right): Anti-violence advocates Richard Lee, Cpl. Gary Law, Kelly Ng, Phebe Chan and a representative from Fairchild TV



Cpl. Gary Law poses with a Fairchild Media crew member before filming begins