

FEMINIST  
NEWS &  
VIEWS

EVELYN LAU: THE POETIC IS POLITICAL | NANCY RUTH: FORCE OF NATURE

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# herizons

HOW  
TO  
STOP



CYBER  
MISOGYNY



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The purpose of HERIZONS is to empower women; to inspire hope and foster a state of wellness that enriches women's lives; to build awareness of issues impacted by gender; to promote the strength, wisdom and creativity of women; to broaden the boundaries of feminism to include building coalitions and support among other marginalized people; to foster peace and ecological awareness; and to expand the influence of feminist principles in the world. HERIZONS aims to reflect a feminist philosophy that is diverse, understandable and relevant to women's daily lives. (1992)

Views expressed in HERIZONS are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect HERIZONS' editorial policy. No material may be reprinted without permission. Due to limited resources, HERIZONS does not accept poetry or fiction submissions.

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Brintha Koneshachandra is a Tamil-French multi-medium artist, poet and illustrator based in Tiohtiàke (Montreal). She is a PhD candidate in history and co-founder of the publishing house *Diverses Syllabes*. Brintha's art explores topics of feminism, Tamil identity and political refugees' experiences. Brintha has contributed to *à bâbord! Sœurs*, *The Funambulist* and *THIS* magazine. Her work has been exhibited in Paris, Grenoble and London.



## ELIZABETH WHITTEN

Elizabeth Whitten is a St. John's-based freelance journalist and *The Independent* (NL) investigative reporter. Her work has been published by the CBC and *Atlantic Business Magazine*, among others. She's currently writing a book on Dr. Cluny Macpherson, who invented the gas mask in World War One.



## GHISLAINE ALLEYNE

Ghislaine Alleyne is a communication and technology specialist, writer and editor who works at the University of Manitoba. She is a seasoned volunteer on *Herizons'* editorial advisory committee and a member of its board of directors. Ghislaine is a lover of cats, musical theatre and eating great food with good friends. She is passionate

about the intersection of race, class, gender and popular culture.



## DEEPA KANDASWAMY

Deepa Kandaswamy is a freelance writer and author based in India. Over her 18-year career, she has had more than 500 articles published in six continents. Deepa writes on gender, the environment and geopolitics and her work has appeared in *Herizons*, *Ms.* and *Women's eNews*. For this issue, she interviewed former Afghan Mayor Zarifa Ghatari, who is living in exile.



## KEMLIN NEMBHARD

Kemlin Nembhard is the executive director of the Women's Health Clinic in Winnipeg. She is especially interested in issues concerning racism and social justice, and their impact on women. Kemlin is a long-time *Herizons* board member and participant on the magazine's editorial advisory team.



## LINDSAY WONG

Lindsay Wong is the bestselling author of *The Wo-o-Woo: How I Survived Ice Hockey, Drug Raids, Demons, and My Crazy Chinese Family*. She has written a YA novel titled *My Summer of Love and Misfortune*. Her short story collection, *Tell Me Pleasant Things About Immortality*, is forthcoming in 2022. Lindsay teaches creative writing at the University of British Columbia.



## MICHELE LANDSBERG

Michele Landsberg is a lefty activist and an officer of the Order of Canada. The author of three best-selling books, Michele worked as a feminist columnist at the *Toronto Star* for 25 years. Her most recent book, *Writing the Revolution*, is a

collection of her influential columns, and includes her reflections on the movement she covered.



## GIO GUZZI

Gio Guzzi is team leader of the birth control and pregnancy counselling program at Winnipeg's Women's Health Clinic. Gio enjoys cooking for friends, sci-fi, magical realism, watching YA series and searching for queer and inclusive content in pop culture. Gio is a keen member of *Herizons'* editorial committee.



## NYALA V. ALI

Nyala V. Ali is a freelance editor and media critic. She holds an MA in cultural studies from the University of Winnipeg, where she occasionally teaches about comic and graphic novel adaptations. Her work has been published in the *Winnipeg Free Press* and *Herizons*, where Nyala is a regular contributor.



## SUZIE DUNN

Suzie Dunn is an assistant professor at Dalhousie University's Schulich School of Law. Her research centers on equality, technology and the law, with a specific focus on technology-facilitated violence, deepfakes and impersonation in digital spaces. Suzie sits on the committee for the Women's Legal Education and Action Fund's (LEAF) Technology-Facilitated Violence Project.



## VALERIE REGEHR

Valerie Regehr has worked in the women's health field for 30 years and recently started a private practice as a bodytalk practitioner. She volunteers as a raptor handler at a wildlife sanctuary and is passionate about dogs, gardening, art and travel. Valerie is a dedicated member of *Herizons'* board of directors. ☺

## nelliegrams



**SIGNAL FOR HELP**  
A hand signal popularized by the Canadian Women's

Foundation on TikTok has been credited with helping a kidnapped North Carolina teenager escape her captor in October.

A motorist in Kentucky alerted authorities after a 16-year-old girl in the back seat of another car held up her hand with her thumb folded over her palm and then folded her four fingers over top. The observant driver recognized the hand signal, and the other driver was taken into custody.

The teen had been missing for two days. A 61-year-old man was charged with unlawful confinement as well as possession of child pornography.

The signal for help was created by the Canadian Women's Foundation in April 2020 to help those experiencing gender-based violence during the pandemic. Information on the foundation's website provides details on how bystanders should respond in such cases.

More than 40 organizations in Canada and the U.S. have promoted the signal as a tool to help those experiencing violence, according to the World Bank, which is among those promoting the use of the hand signal. —*The Toronto Star and the Canadian Women's Foundation*

### BROADCASTING EQUITY

Gender equality in American newsrooms is most common in television, where women make up half of anchors and correspondents on prime time weekday evening news.

According to the Women's Media Center report, *Divided 2021: The Media Gender Gap*, national TV outlets MSNBC, PBS, CBS and CNN met or exceeded 50 percent reportage by women.

Across all media platforms, however, male reporters had 65 percent of news bylines and credits, while female reporters had 34 percent.

Researchers analyzed 62,002 news items from January 1 through March 31, 2020, involving 30 news outlets across four platforms: print newspaper, online news, broadcast network and cable TV news, and

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## Afghanistan Mayor Vows to Challenge Taliban

by DEEPA KANDASWAMY

The crisis in Afghanistan has left women's rights advocates in Afghanistan bereft as women have been quickly exterminated from public life, losing 20 years of progress virtually overnight.

Case in point: In January 2021, the UN Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women released a report titled *Women in Politics 2021* that included data collected from 193 countries. According to the report Afghanistan reported 27 percent female politicians in its lower and upper houses of Parliament.

A mere eight months later, in August 2021, Afghan women politicians were forced to flee or hide due to the return of the Taliban to power. On October 7, 2021, the UN appointed a new special rapporteur on Afghanistan to probe violations carried out by the Taliban amid growing concern over the erosion of civil rights, especially women's rights, and reports of attacks and killings.

In an exclusive interview, Zarifa Ghafari, the first female mayor of the city of Maidan Shahr, in Afghanistan's central Wardak province, talked to *Herizons* from Germany, where she fled after the return of the Taliban in August. Ghafari, who at 29 is the youngest Afghan female politician, has survived multiple assassination attempts by the Taliban. In the fall, she addressed and met with EU politicians and NGOs to seek support for the Afghan cause. Ghafari is one of the nominees for the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought awarded by the European Union. She has a master's degree in economics from Panjab University, Chandigarh, India.

*Herizons: Tell us about yourself and your family.*

My name is Zarifa Ghafari. I have three sisters and three brothers. My dad was a colonel of defense ministry till he was murdered by the Taliban. My mom was a teacher till the fall of Kabul on the 15th of August 2021. I'm blessed by having Bashir Mohammadi as a friend, adviser and life partner.



Zarifa Ghafari fled to Germany from the city of Maidan, where she was mayor, after Taliban forces took control of Afghanistan in August.

*What made you enter politics?*

It was always a childhood passion and later, the social injustice against women, as well as realizing the need for women politicians, made me struggle and be part of active politics.

*What was life like under the previous rule of the Taliban—was it worse?*

I don't remember about that time, except Kabul city was full of fear, silence and dust. I studied about it in books after getting to school and university. Therefore, when I saw them entering Kabul on August 15th, it made me feel that they had become crueler and more horrible.

*Why did the Afghan government agree to peace talks knowing that it would destabilize the country?*

The agreement was signed only between Taliban and the U.S. government, there was no agreement between Taliban and Afghan government. That's why we say that U.S. sold us out to our enemies, which are Taliban, in particular, and Pakistan.

*Are you saying the former Afghan government had no say in the Doha talks between U.S. and Taliban? What about Afghan women who were part of the negotiating team?*

They were part of the Afghan negotiations team but had no role in the deal between Taliban and the U.S. The deal

was facilitated by [former U.S. special Afghan representative Zalmay] Khalilzad and Taliban in Doha, Qatar.

*Why was there no protest by Afghan people when the U.S. decided to talk to the Taliban?*  
Because we thought they won't sell us out and we thought to use this opportunity for lasting peace, but after some time the U.S. made a deal with Taliban. They sold us out and for this deal we had so many protests. Afghan people did protest against this deal.

*What made you flee Afghanistan? Do you have family left in Afghanistan?*  
Fleeing my country wasn't my choice but I had to because of family pressure to leave for my safety—the family responsibilities that I have after the murder of my dad. And when I realized that staying in Kabul won't change anything and I won't be able to speak out on behalf of unspoken people of Afghanistan, I just left with my husband, mom, brothers and sisters. And yeah, I have close relatives, friends and colleagues in Afghanistan who are not in a good situation. I'm really feeling bad as I'm not able to do anything specific to change their lives.

*Are Afghan women politicians who got out and Afghan women who were in governmental positions still in touch with each other?*  
Yes, many Afghan women from different parts with expertise in government are in touch and trying to help women who are still inside the country.

*What do you think women activist-politicians like you can do now?*  
We can be the voice of our people. We can follow the steps of great change makers and leaders like Nelson Mandela, Gandhi and all those great fighters who fought for liberty, development and human rights in their societies. We have never been part of conflicts, so we can now be the agents of peace and we can make changes for sure.

*Do you see yourself returning to Afghanistan? If so, under what circumstances and do you*

*think the world will see Afghan women politicians in the near future?*  
Whenever I feel the Pakistani invasion has ended in my country. Pakistan should stop invading my country through Taliban and Haqqani\* groups and when I get done with raising public awareness about the dirty games of Pakistan around the globe, I'll return back home and I'm sure Afghanistan will be safer not only for me but for all women.

*What do you want the women of the world to do apart from signing petitions that will ensure that women's rights are respected in Afghanistan now?*  
Signing the petition is a start, but we need, global-wise, women's solidarity women's joint voices and partnership with Afghan women. We need women in all fields, especially women politicians, to take concrete actions toward sanctioning Pakistan and via that, pressurizing Taliban to protect human rights, in particular women's rights.

*Have you ever considered forming an organization consisting of only Afghan women that can take on the Taliban?*  
I'm planning for long-term to have an organization focused on human rights, in particular women's rights in Afghanistan. And the current project that I have is a proposal for providing educational courses and professional training to Afghan women in rural areas for which I'm looking for donors.

*Do you think the women protesting in Afghanistan now can keep up the protest campaigns with the help of the resistance front and women politicians like you who are abroad?*  
Definitely they can and they will because we are raising voices abroad and they are our arms inside Afghanistan.

*With the winter coming soon, do you think Afghan women can keep protesting against the Taliban?*  
We know it's hard but fighting for rights is always more important than anything else. I know it'll be hard but I am sure we will never stop. ❀

\* The Haqqani network is an Afghan guerrilla insurgent group with ties to Pakistan's military, and is responsible for some of Afghanistan's deadliest attacks during the War in Afghanistan from 2001 to 2020. Following the fall of Afghanistan in August, the Haqqani network was put in charge of domestic security by the Taliban.

wire services in the United States.  
Prime time weekday evening news broadcasts were the most equitable for female reporters, while print newspapers and wires were the least equitable, according to the researcher Julie Burton, president and CEO of the Women's Media Center.

"Women are more than half of the population, yet it's men who are telling most of the stories," said Burton.  
Male reporters continue to dominate coverage of sports, weather, legal, opinions and editorials, business and economy, science and the environment, and elections.

However, news reportage about COVID-19, racial justice issues and other social justice topics were the most gender balanced, with gaps ranging between zero and three percentage points. The Women's Media Center was co-founded by Jane Fonda, Robin Morgan and Gloria Steinem.

"Women must be visible and powerful in all aspects of media if American society is ever to be a real democracy," said Steinem.



### MEXICO PAVES WAY FOR ABORTION LEGALIZATION

On September 7, Mexico's Supreme Court unanimously deemed penalties against abortion unconstitutional, effectively paving the road for widened access throughout the country. The ruling immediately liberalized access to abortion up to pregnancies of 12 weeks in the state of Coahuila, which borders Texas.

"It is a watershed in the history of the rights of all women, especially the most vulnerable," said Supreme Court Chief Justice Arturo Zaldivar.

Abortion remains illegal in much of Mexico, except in cases of rape and, in some areas, if a woman's life was threatened. Four Mexican states have now legalized abortion (Mexico City, Oaxaca, Veracruz and Hidalgo); penalties restrict access to abortion in the other 28 states.

"It's an enormous step toward legalization in the entire country," said Rebeca Ramos, the executive director of GIRE, a reproductive rights group.