

SWEATscene

Newsletter of the Sex Workers' Education & Advocacy Taskforce September/October 2000

2nd Floor Community House, 41 Salt River Rd, Salt River • Tel: (021) 448 7875 • Fax: (021) 448 7857 • E-mail: sweat@iafrica.com

CAPE TOWN TALKS ABOUT SEX WORKERS!

On Monday 25 September, as part of the One City Festival, the Black Arts Collective hosted a debate about sex work. Natasha from SWEAT spoke about the why the government should decriminalize sex work. Khadija Magardie, a journalist from the Mail and Guardian newspaper, sent a speech talking about how sex work should be abolished by changing the law to make the clients criminals, so they can be arrested for buying sex from sex workers. Members of the public came to the debate, and talked about their feelings about sex work, and asked questions and gave comments. Generally most people were supportive of the fact that sex workers deserve human rights, even if they didn't like the idea that people sell sex for a living.

The city is starting to talk about sex work and sex workers, which is very exciting. It is a chance for SWEAT to talk about the realities of the industry, and to break down some of the stereotypes that many members of the public have about sex workers and sex work. One element that is missing from these discussions is the voices of sex workers themselves. SWEAT points out that it is very difficult for sex workers to talk publicly because of the stigmatization they suffer, and because sex work is still illegal. If you are interested in talking to the public about your experiences and opinions, please contact SWEAT and let us know, so that next time there is a chance to speak to the public we can invite you along.

CLOSURE OF ILLEGAL GAMBLING ESTABLISHMENTS

On 22 August 2000, four illegal casinos in Sea Point were closed. The owners and personnel can be criminally charged and risk being sentenced to a maximum fine of R 2 million or imprisoned of 10 years. Patrons of the respective casinos who were on the premises at the time of their closure were each given the option of paying an admission of guilt fine of R 300. The gamblers who pay these fines will now have criminal records.



**I am not selling sex!
I am selling condoms,
with free demonstration.**

The Western Cape Gambling and Racing Board, whose aims are to establish the legal gambling industry in the Western Cape and to regulate the gambling and racing industry to ensure that it would be administered honestly and transparently and to ensure that the interests of the citizens of the Western Cape are protected, is determined to continue tracking down and closing illegal gambling establishments with the Director of Public Prosecutions and the South African Police Services. The Board believes that unlawful gambling establishments do not pay tax and are often linked with other forms of crime and social evils including racketeering, money laundering, prostitution and drug-dealing.

This action takes place on the eve of the opening of the new legal casino in Goodwood in November this year. The Tygerberg Municipality is expecting to see a change in the patterns of sex work in the area, with an increased number of sex workers offering their services close to the casino.
(From Cape Times, Thursday 31 August 2000 and other sources)

(Thanks to the Department of Health for forwarding the cartoon to SWEAT!)

This Newsletter was sponsored by the Department of Health

Poems

Image of the Prostitute

We are the whores of your society
for which we are:
stigmatized, marginalized, ostracized.
Despised,
disenfranchised, dehumanized,
discredited, disinherited, disowned.
Studied, blamed, raped, imprisoned,
rendered invisible - but
we won't go away.
And now you must deal with us as
artists.
For we are also:
creative, artistic, poetic,
sensual, erotic,
multi-talented, diverse,
interesting,
thespians, comedic, playful,
fantasy weavers, sagacious,
loving, giving, nurturing,
empathetic,
compassionate, patient, tender
and strong.
We are people, just like you....

(Norma Jean/Renata 1997)

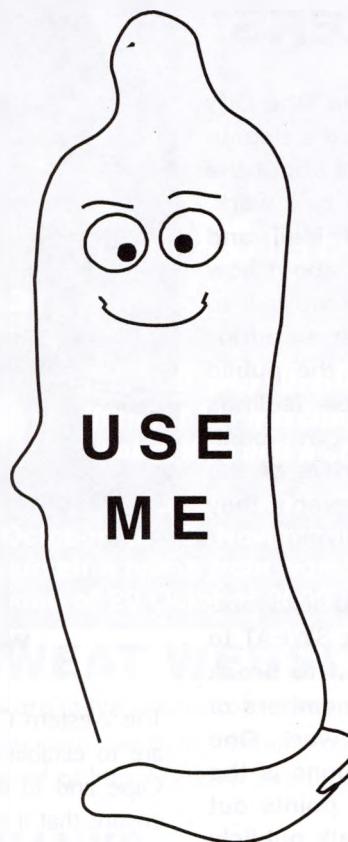
Anonymous Poem

We're doing prostitution
Although it's no solution
It's just a substitution
We make a contribution
We've found a resolution
We don't want persecution

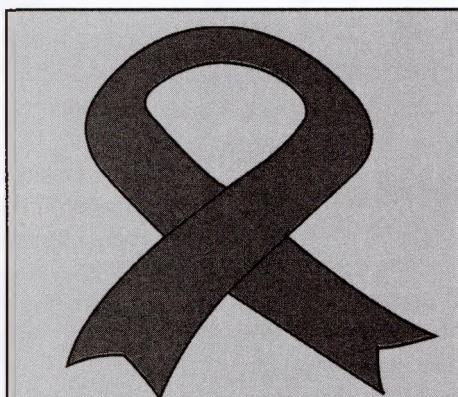
We're doing prostitution
It's an old age institution
You know it's not pollution
We need some absolution
Perhaps a revolution
A brand new constitution
To end this persecution

(Anonymous: From Making Sex Work Safe; NSWP, 1997)

HIV/AIDS message from Clayton



In this business your body is the most valuable asset; Check y' self... before y' wreck y' self!



AIDS HELPLINE
TEL: 0800-012-322

WHAT I WANT TO SEE IN THE NEWSLETTER IS...

SWEAT would like to hear your ideas for this newsletter. Please speak to a SWEAT volunteer or staff member, or write to us at: SWEAT, PO Box: 373, Woodstock, 7915 Tel: 448 7875

NEWS SNIPPETS

"Sex in the Mother City" banned for further viewing

Some of you may have watched a programme called "Sex in the Mother City" in July this year. The programme looked at the different kinds of sex for sale in Cape Town, both on the streets and indoors.

SWEAT has heard that the documentary has been banned for further viewing. This means that it may not be broadcast on television in South Africa again.

Keep Business Respectable!

Remember to think about the residents in areas where you are working. We often get complaints about girls who flash, throw used condoms in people's gardens and make a lot of noise late at night.

The less you hassle the people living in your area, the less the chances are that you will be arrested.

If you want to have your voice heard, remember that you have a right to attend meetings in the communities where you work. The Community Policing Forums are one place you can get involved. Go to the meetings as a group and make your voices heard!

NEWS SNIPPETS

(continue...)

Increased arrests of street sex workers in Goodwood

We have received a lot of reports of regular arresting of sex workers along Voortrekker Road in Goodwood. Sex workers are being charged with "soliciting or acting in such a way as to lead to soliciting". This is a municipal by-law, which applies only in the Tygerberg area.

SWEAT has tried to find out whether there is anything that can be done to stop the arrests. Unfortunately the arrests are legal and the police say they are being forced to take action because of complaints from residents in the area. This means that as long as law enforcement follow the correct arrest and detention procedures, the arrests can take place.

SWEAT would like to encourage sex workers who are arrested to appear in court on their court dates. When you go to court, it is up to law enforcement to prove to the court that you were arrested while you were working. The fact that you are known to be a sex worker to law enforcement is not enough reason for them to arrest you. So the magistrate can't force you to pay the fine unless it can be proved that you were working at the time of your arrest. If you were just walking down the street or coming out of a shop on personal business, you are not guilty of any offense.

Tygerberg Municipality considers red light district

Good news for those applying for business licenses in the Tygerberg area is that your license can't be refused on the grounds of morality. This means that your application for a license in a business area can only be turned down if you do not pass a health inspection or if the applicant is not suitable to operate a business.



The Tygerberg Municipality is reported to looking into the possibility of setting up a specific area, which would be demarcated for the sex industry. This would mean that something similar to a red light district could be established. Many residents in the area are opposed to the idea. The matter is still under discussion.

INTERDICT GRANTED

On Friday, 27 October 2000, the Cape High Court granted an urgent interdict to prevent the owner of two Wynberg escort agencies from among other things, conducting, carrying on or being interested in the business of a massage parlour, escort agency or brothel.

The order was sought following complaints that the owner was violating the human rights of workers



by among other things forcing them to work for 18 hours a day, restricting their freedom of movement and association and for being in contempt of a court for violating material conditions of a previous court order that was granted against her in June last year, by continuing to lock up workers against their will and by threatening them.

The interdict, obtained by the Women's Legal Centre on behalf of **SWEAT**, will be made final in November unless the owner can prove that she was not in contempt of court.

BELATED HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO SHANE PETZER

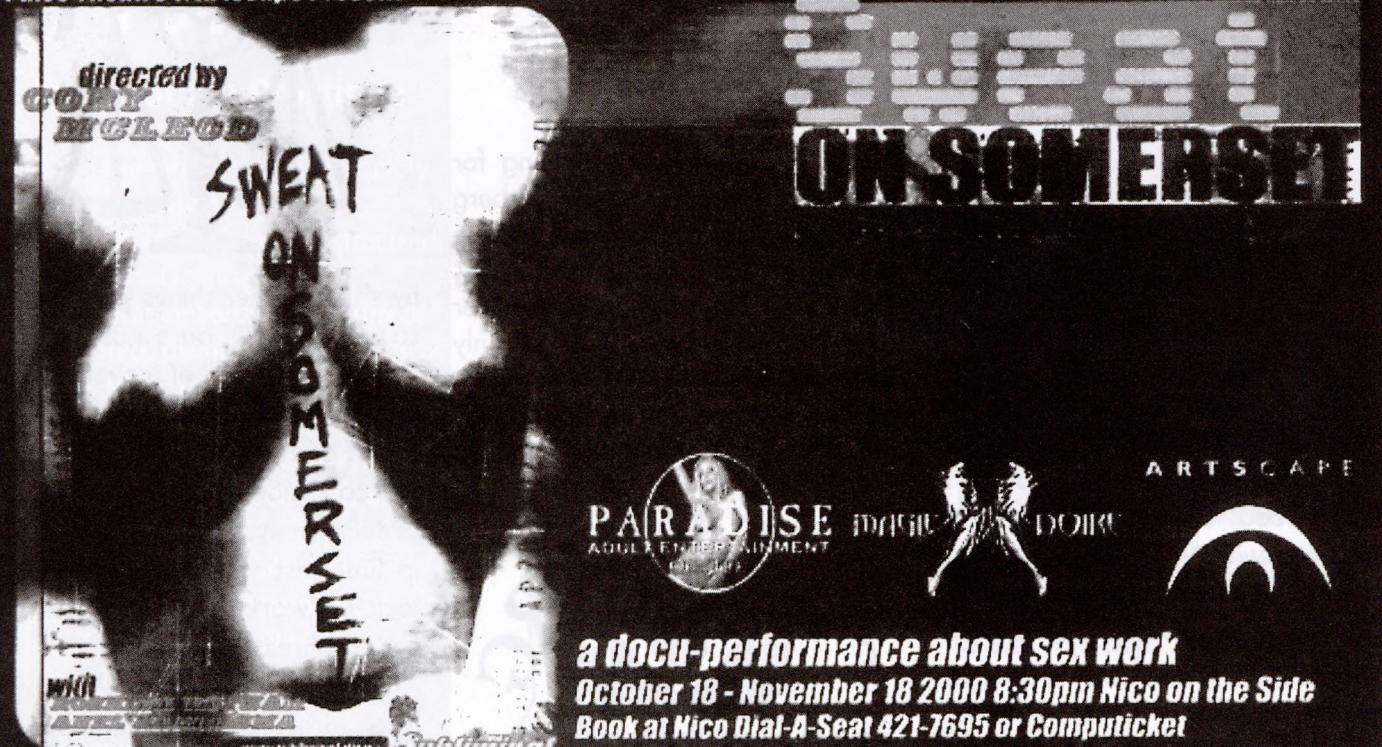
Happy birthday to Shane Petzer (ex-Director of **SWEAT**) who recently celebrated his birthday. Shane is still very much alive and kicking. He is currently doing research on drug treatment for people living with HIV/AIDS.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THIS EDITION OF SWEATSCENE:

Contributors to this edition of SWEATScene: **Jillian, Natasha Clayton and Jill**

If you would like to contribute something to newsletter, contact Jillian on 4487875 (w).

Pulse Theatre & Artscape Present



directed by
CORY McCLEOD

SWEAT
ON SOMERSET

PARADISE ADULT ENTERTAINMENT

ARTSCAPE

NICO ON THE SIDE

a docu-performance about sex work

October 18 - November 18 2000 8:30pm Nico on the Side

Book at Nico Dial-A-Seat 421-7695 or Computicket

SWEAT on Somerset is a docu-performance about sex work. The play is directed by Cory McCleod and runs at Nico on the Side from 18 October to 18 November. Book at Nico Dial-A-Seat 421769 or Computicket. Get out there and give yourself a break from work! Thanks to Cory for providing a free performance for sex workers on the afternoon of 20 October 2000!

NEW FACES

A new lot of prospective volunteers will be trained towards the end of October, so look out for the new faces visiting you... remember we are always looking for volunteers to support us with our outreach work. Applications are available from the SWEAT office.

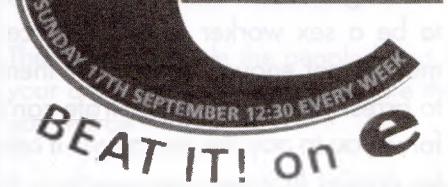
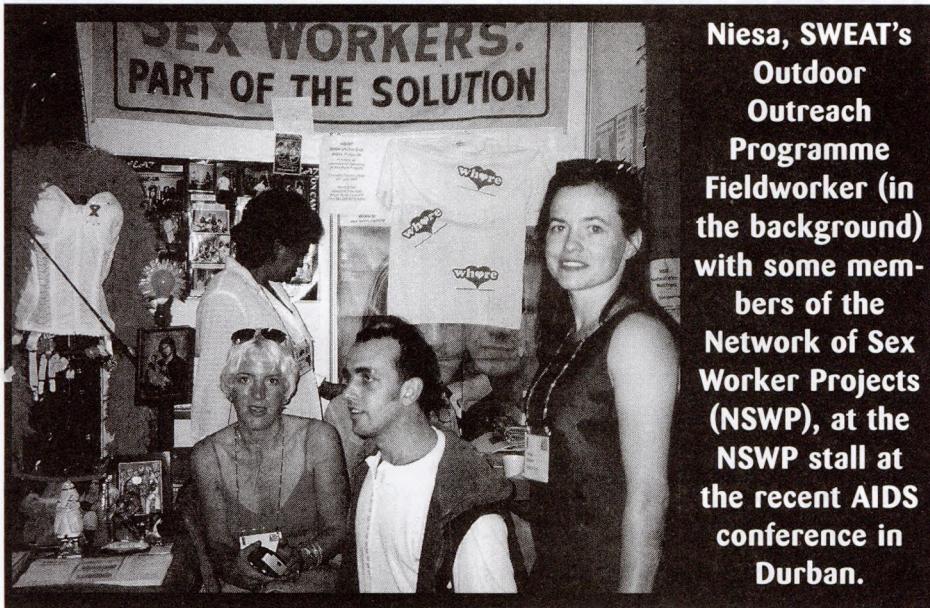
SWEAT WEBSITE

We are in the process of setting up our very own website which can be viewed at <http://www.sweat.com>.

THANKS

A big thanks to those workers and

agencies who so generously make voluntary donations to SWEAT for outreach services. We have improved our receipt system so Jillian, Clayton or Lisa will issue you with a receipt for any donations you make to the organization.



BEAT IT ON e-TV

Be sure to catch Beat It, a television programme dealing with HIV/AIDS on e-TV on Sundays 12h30 every week.