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Herstory Café celebrates women's history

October 8, 2009

By Diane Luckow

October is women's history month, and no one is better prepared than Lara Campbell. She's co-creator of the Herstory Café, a monthly meeting at various venues around Vancouver where women's history buffs socialize and listen to special presentations about women from times past.

An assistant professor in SFU's department of women's studies, Campbell teaches Canadian women's history, gender and social activism. She helped start the café two years ago because she wanted to bring women's history to the public, not just to students and academics.

"We don't just talk about Vancouver women's history," she says. "We have explored the history of women in Mexico and Ireland, women and French fashion—a little bit of everything."

Campbell expects a large turnout for the upcoming Oct. 14 Herstory Café at Vancouver City Hall.

"Local historian Irene Howard will be talking about Vancouver's first alderwoman, Helena Gutteridge, who was elected in 1937," says Campbell. "She was very passionate about labour reforms such as the eight-hour day and minimum wage, as well as homelessness and votes for women."

Campbell has a book coming out this fall entitled *Respectable Citizens: Gender, Family and Unemployment in Ontario's Great Depression*. Based on her 2002 PhD thesis, it's a scholarly examination of how people in the 1930s pushed for welfare reforms such as unemployment insurance and adequate welfare. "I think it's of interest to anyone interested in women's history or gender history." www.herstorycafe.ca

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