



Action
Advocacy
Education

CANADIAN FEDERATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN
ONTARIO COUNCIL

Dates & Data

Ontario Council Newsletter Vol V, Issue 5

February 2007

ONTARIO COUNCIL STANDING COMMITTEES

Saturday, March 3rd, 2007

University Women's Club of Toronto, 162 St. George Street, Toronto

Registration 9:00 to 10:00 a.m. Meeting Begins at 10:00 a.m. Registration Form Enclosed

MORNING PROGRAMME

THE REFORM OF ONTARIO'S ELECTORAL SYSTEM: SAVIOUR OR THREAT TO DEMOCRACY?

The Ontario Citizens Assembly is a little-known body which has great potential to fundamentally alter the nature of democracy in Ontario. Composed of 103 randomly selected citizens plus a neutral Chair, the OCA has been given the task by the Ontario Government of recommending whether the province should abandon its centuries-old 'first-past-the-post' electoral system. The OCA must report to government by mid-May and, if it makes a specific recommendation, it will be put to a vote in a referendum this Fall.

Proponents of reform and defenders of the existing system have made all manner of claims as to the prospects of electoral reform for greatly enhancing the quality of Ontario democracy – or for grievously harming it. Who's right? What's at stake? Is an electoral system based on the principle of 'proportional representation' the answer to what ails Ontario politics – or would it make things worse? What is this 'Citizens Assembly' and why should these unelected people be in such a position of power?

ABOUT OUR SPEAKER

Graham White, PhD, is Professor of Political Science at the University of Toronto, specializing in Canadian government and politics, especially at the provincial and territorial level. He has written or edited a dozen books on various aspects of Canadian politics. Dr. White's two most recent books, both published by UBC Press, are *Cycling into Saigon: The Conservative Transition in Ontario* (with David R. Cameron) and *Cabinets and First Ministers*. He is currently at work on two books on government and politics in Nunavut and the Northwest Territories.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE AFTERNOON SESSION

For the afternoon session the Education Committee will have a guest speaker from *People for Education*. Annie Kidder, Executive Director will be speaking on the issues in education that are at the forefront as we prepare for a provincial election in early October. *People for Education* is a non-profit organization working to support education in Ontario's English, French and Catholic schools.

Wendy Taylor, Chair

What's Inside

- Standing Committee Registration Form • OC AGM Information
- What's New on the Web • Regional Round Up

STATUS OF WOMEN & HUMAN RIGHTS AFTERNOON SESSION

Come and meet Marilyn Oladimeji, President of the *Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres* who will tell us about her work with this organization. She is also a teacher at George Brown College in the program "Assaulted Women's and Children's Counsellor/Advocate". You will want to hear about this creative program and the plan to train abused women for air conditioning and heating technician jobs.

In addition we will discuss possible issues and questions we would like to ask of our candidates in the upcoming provincial election. Bring your ideas for these questions.

Judie Arrowood, Chair

LEGISLATION COMMITTEE AFTERNOON SESSION


Since we are assured of an Ontario election on October 4, and the possibility of a federal election as well this year, this meeting of the Legislation Standing Committee will be devoted to election issues and how we can be involved both as individuals and as members of CFUW. Here are the plans:

1. Electoral Reform - After the morning session with Dr. Graham White, do you still have burning issues about electoral reform? If so, we'll discuss them further. You might want to investigate the Electoral System Referendum Act (Bill 155) at <http://www.ontla.on.ca/library/bills/382/155382.htm>
2. All Candidates Meetings - Here's an opportunity to share your experiences and learn from each other. Consider an All Candidates' Meeting as a method of making public the concerns reflected in CFUW resolutions. This also is a way to fulfill CFUW's purpose of "active participation in public affairs".
3. Pose questions for the candidates. Bring a question that you would like to ask your sitting MPP and/or your election candidates. Discuss the questions that we as CFUW members will want to ask. They will later be collated, edited where necessary, and put on the website and/or sent out to the Clubs.

Elaine Harvey, Chair

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Welcome back to everyone and on behalf of the Executive of Ontario Council, I wish you and your Club all the best in this New Year. After reading the Regional Reviews in our *Dates and Data*, Ontario Council *is alive and doing spectacularly in every way!*

 No one needs to be reminded of the federal and provincial elections that will take place during 2007. On the provincial scene, we know that the date is Oct. 4th, so we have to be ready! CFUW Ontario Council Advocacy Committee (all three Standing Committee Chairs and the ad hoc Advocacy Chair) are in the midst of developing a package for all Clubs to use. It will include a series of questions on each issue with background that would provide an indication of how well your questions are being answered by the candidates. Some of the issues that will be included and are of concern to OC will be: ending the clawback of the NCBS, early learning and child care, the funding formula for Ontario's School Boards, the LHINs, Poverty, Violence against women, implementation legislation of the GLC Annex Agreement 2005 that will protect the waters of the Great Lakes, and others. There will also be information on how to organize an All-Candidates meeting. Use this package to question candidates during a visit to your MPP(s). Ask for their position on each issues. Find out what the platform of their Party is. Consider inviting knowledgeable speakers to meetings even if your programs are set for the year. Study the steps in organizing an All-Candidates Meeting, and if it is too much for your Club to undertake, consider joining another organization within your riding but get yourself and your Club involved now!!



In the September edition of our *Dates and Data*, I wrote about the Citizens Assembly whose mandate is to assess Ontario's electoral system, and others, and make a recommendation whether Ontario should retain its current system or adopt a different one. Andrew Coyne from The National Post remarked on CBC the other evening that the Citizens Assembly is the most under-reported issue in

Ontario. I would agree.

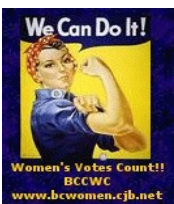
Although we have no policy to advocate for one system over another, on May 15th, the Assembly will be recommending the electoral system they feel will serve Ontarians best. If we are to cast an informed vote in the referendum that follows, it will be important that we understand the different systems, one of which will appear on the ballot.

In our first-past-the-post system, also called the single member plurality system, one party may win considerably less than half the popular vote but still have a parliamentary majority. Peter Russell, Professor Emeritus in Political Science, University of Toronto, refers to this as a *false majority*. It was at the UWC North York guest night that I first heard Professor Russell speak about false and true majority governments in Canada. False majority governments act as if they represent the majority of Canadians when in fact they rarely do. The Liberals under Jean Chrétien never won more than 41% of the popular vote in three elections. True majority governments are rare. Why is this? Simply because Canada has moved from a two-party to a multi-party system. Having said that, can you list the three true majority governments we have had in Canada since the end of the First World War? (See page 8)

Proportional representation refers to a family of electoral systems which ensures that the proportion of seats won by a party in a legislative assembly reflects the proportion of popular votes won by that party. Proportional representation can be achieved by either the list system or the single transferable vote (STV). Some degree of proportionality can be achieved by mixing proportional representation with a non-proportional system, called a mixed member proportional system (MMP). It usually combines the first-past-the-post and the list system. For more information on these systems, go to www.citizensassembly.gov.on.ca Click on *The Classroom*, followed by *The Library* and *Stacks*.

June MacDonald, Chair of *Women for Fair Voting* wrote, referring to *Women beyond numbers; IDEA.*, "Around the world in developed countries, proportional systems have been shown to give a much better representation for women than the few countries retaining our first past the post system. In all of these systems much depends on the details and women themselves who are willing to stand for election and work within parties promoting women. But all things being equal, changing a country's electoral system often represents a far more realistic goal to work towards than dramatically changing the culture's view of women."

At our March Standing Committee meeting, the speaker will be Dr. Graham White, Professor of Political Science at the University of Toronto. Dr. White will speak on electoral reform, outlining the main options for proportional representation and the effects that each of these systems would have on the style of our government.



Historically, the last quarter of 2006 will be remembered in CFUW as a time when women in Canada had finally achieved equality, at least according to Minister Bev Oda and Prime Minister Stephen Harper. Did we agree? Just the opposite! The letter writing, visits to MPs, rallies in Ottawa and across the country were testament to the anger directed against our government and the deep concerns we continue to feel about the future of women in this country.

We are now into 2007 and this year should prove to be even more historical for our Federation as we continue to pressure the Government of Canada to acknowledge that:

- women do not have equality;
- reducing the SWC administration budget by 40% will seriously cripple the work it has done on behalf of women across Canada;
- eliminating the Court Challenges Program will deny access to justice for those who feel that their rights are being infringed by the laws of their country;
- continuing with their *national child care program* will keep many women, particularly those living in poverty, from earning a decent living, as well as their children from receiving quality child care and early learning development;
- deciding not to implement the recommendations of the 2004 Report of the Pay Equity Task Force will

continue to be a key barrier to women achieving equality in the workplace. In so doing, the Government of Canada is in contravention of the Canadian Human Rights Act of 1970 and the recommendations of the United Nations Convention on the *Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)*, ratified by Canada in 1981.

Our advocacy on all of the issues of today will take time to resolve but, when they are resolved, others will replace them. Your willingness to *stand up for* those who are not able to do so themselves is what we are all about in CFUW. Advocacy is how all of us can share in determining and shaping the society in which we live.

Linda MacGregor

STANDING COMMITTEE ANNOUNCEMENT

At the January Standing Committee meeting, an announcement was made that an ad hoc executive committee had been set up to look for an alternate venue to the UWC Toronto Clubhouse for these meetings.

By this time all Club presidents should have received a letter with more details. Comments and suggestions are welcome at cfuwontario@yahoo.com

ADVOCACY AWARDS

Check the criteria and document what you have done. The winner in each category (relating to Club size) wins one registration to the 2008 Ontario Council AGM.

For more information contact your Regional Director or the Advocacy Committee at tcshaw@cogeco.ca

REGIONAL ROUNDUP

ONTARIO EAST

Petra Friedrichson - Regional Director

In Ontario East, three Clubs increased their membership in 2006.

Congratulations to CFUW **Belleville & District**, CFUW **Kanata** and CFUW **Perth & District**. Clubs range from 24 members (Renfrew) to 520 members (Ottawa). Not all Clubs include associate members yet. Regionally we are looking towards creating a website for every Club, as potential new CFUW members nowadays often check out a Club via their website. Being represented on the internet will be an indispensable recruiting tool for CFUW in the future. Overall Eastern Ontario region CFUW Clubs have strengthened their profile within their communities by

being visible, participating in public affairs and inviting community leaders to speak to their membership.

In December 2006, CFUW **Belleville & District** added their voice to that of other CFUW Clubs on several issues of importance to women. Club president Martha A. Grant communicated with her MP, Daryl Kramp, regarding the withdrawal of funding for Status of Women initiatives. Belleville's local MPP, Ernie Parsons presented the petitions from the Eastern regional Clubs regarding the claw back of the National Child Benefit Supplement to budget deliberations which were underway at Queen's Park.

CFUW **Brockville and District** members are organizing the "Mayor's Walk" on April 14th. This date is an important fund raising event, sponsored by the Volunteer Bureau of Leeds and Grenville. While the Bureau takes care of all the details, CFUW members will get pledges and walk. The Club will receive 50 percent of their own pledges, with the remainder being directed to the Volunteer Bureau for its work. This is a good example of working together with outside agencies, supporting two worthy causes.... AND benefitting from increased physical activity at the same time!

CFUW **Cornwall & District** has organized a panel of three leading women in the community (a superior court judge, the CEO of the local hospital, and the head of the Chamber of Commerce, Cornwall) to speak at their next general meeting about "Women in Power". Mobilizing such great outside leaders from the community to come and talk at a CFUW meeting is another proof of our status within our communities.

CFUW **Kanata** is busy preparing for the October 20th, 2007 Eastern Ontario Regional Fall Gathering in their community. Vice president Elizabeth Pulker has rounded up a great team which is committed to providing a memorable experience for members of our sister Clubs.

CFUW **Kingston** will be setting up a new bursary to celebrate the 60th anniversary of their Club in 2008. The silent auction at Christmas raised \$ 800 to give this project a good head start. The speaker at the next general meeting will inform CFUW members about the environmental impact of a plant burning old tires in the community. This is just one example of many on how CFUW members in all our Clubs continue to educate themselves before taking possible action .

CFUW **Nepean** will also continue to educate their members on environmental issues. Speaker, Frank Pope, a past president of The Ottawa Field Naturalists, will present to the Club at their March general meeting. Responsible stewardship of our natural resources also received mention in CFUW Nepean's January newsletter. A website

(www.seachoice.org) on ethical fish and seafood choices lets consumers ponder about where their seafood comes from and recommends choosing fish and shellfish that are caught or raised in the most sustainable way.

CFUW **Orleans** tried to tackle a model of shared leadership this year, but found it a challenge at times. Most members of this Club have small children at home and full time careers. Club members primarily enjoy the social aspect of the Club and hope some members will step forward and offer to lead next year.

CFUW **Ottawa** organized and sponsored a public forum *What do Women Want from the Government of Canada?* on November 23, 2006 with Sheila McIntyre, Professor of Law, University of Ottawa, Andree Coté, Chair of the National Association of Women and the Law, Monica Lysack, Child Care Association of Canada and Nancy Peckford, Program Director of the Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action. The broad constituency of women represented at the forum included academics, women's groups and several MPs and their staffs. The forum was wide-ranging and stimulating. A great success for CFUW Ottawa!

CFUW **Perth & District** officially launched at their Club's Christmas dinner a project called *Shoe boxes for Chernobyl* as the Club's international endeavor. The boxes were donated with personal care items for seniors living in nursing homes in Chernobyl. The February meeting will be the final "box drop off". So far the membership has donated 25 boxes filled with great personal care items as well as note paper, hard candy, cards etc. CFUW members not only had a lot of fun, but, most importantly, know that they will make a difference.

CFUW **Renfrew & District** also is very keen on environmental issues. President Barbara Mook would like to explore Al Gore's documentary and his recently published book within the wider CFUW community. Thanks to the available technology today, we can connect with each other more easily and hopefully continue to move mountains.

**Ontario Council AGM
May 11th and 12th , 2007
Holiday Inn, Peterborough Waterfront
*Women, Water and Well-Being***

**KEYNOTE LUNCHEON SPEAKER
ELIZABETH MAY**

Most notably the leader of Canada's Green Party, Elizabeth May is also known as an environmentalist, activist, lawyer and author. She was the founding executive director of the Sierra Club of Canada, a former vice-chair of the National Round Table on the Environment and Economy and an Officer of the Order of Canada. Elizabeth will speak to us about Water Issues from a National Perspective.

WORKSHOPS

Women and Water: The Global Reality by Rosemary Ganley

Rosemary Ganley is a graduate of the University of Toronto and has spent several years involved in international development co-operation especially with regard to third world countries. She is also the founder of the Jamaica Self-Help Centre in Peterborough. In her workshop, she will outline the water situation in several developing and developed countries from a woman's point of view.

Human and Environmental Impact on Fresh Water by Marguerite Xenopoulos

Marguerite Xenopoulos is a professor of Biology at Trent University. She has just been awarded an Early Researcher Award from the Ministry of Research and Innovation to study the impact of climate change on freshwater ecosystems. In her workshop, she will be discussing her current research.

Interactive Program on Water Use, Management and Distribution by Karen Kun

Karen Kun is a professional consultant for, and founder of, a company called *Waterlution*. She has a background in business and geography with a focus on water and environmental management. She will be leading a two-part interactive workshop on the long-term solutions we can use to sustain the water health of our communities.

Municipal Water Treatment and Conservation Techniques by Rosemary Kelleher-MacLennan

Rosemary Kelleher-MacLennan is a past Chair of the Ontario Municipal Water Association, a political advocacy and public education organization representing over 180 municipal water authorities. In that role she lobbied the Ontario government to retain public ownership of provincial water systems. She now serves as a Councillor for the Municipality of Trent Hills. Rosemary will speak to us about municipal water treatment and conservation techniques.

In addition, the Friday evening reception will feature the drumming and dancing of WASHKIIGONAANG, a group of aboriginal dancers from the Curve Lake Reserve.

The weekend promises to be both exciting and stimulating. Please make plans to attend.

SPECIAL NOTE TO ALL CLUBS ATTENDING ONTARIO COUNCIL AGM

Unfortunately, it will not be possible to hang Club banners at the AGM. The regulations at the newly redecorated Holiday Inn, Peterborough Waterfront do not permit hangings, posters etc.

WATCH THE ONTARIO COUNCIL WEB SITE

www.cfuwontcouncil.ca

FOR

- ★ NEWS ★ STANDING COMMITTEE PROGRAMS ★ REPORTS ★
- ★ REGISTRATION FORMS ★ ADVOCACY ALERTS ★
- ★ ISSUES UPDATES ★ CLUB ACTIVITIES ★ AGM INFORMATION★
- ★ AND MORE! ★

RECENT ADDITIONS:

- News Updates www.cfuwontcouncil.ca
- January Standing Committees Reports, (Education - Legislation - Status of Women & Human Rights) and Registration Form for March meeting with new mailing address www.cfuwontcouncil.ca/standing%20committees.html
- Issues:
 - CFUW Burlington Brief
www.cfuwontcouncil.ca/issues%20annual%20briefs.html
 - CFUW Southport Brief
www.cfuwontcouncil.ca/issues%20annual%20briefs.html
 - Letters to the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities www.cfuwontcouncil.ca/Education%20letters.html
 - UWC North York's forum on *Income Security for Working Age Adults*
www.cfuwontcouncil.ca/issues%20family%20poverty.html
 - Ontario Council comments on the Regulations re: Bill 43, the Clean Water Act, concerning the Source Protection Committees
www.cfuwontcouncil.ca/issues%20clean%20water.html

END NOTES

ADDRESS CHANGE

The mailing address for March 3rd, 2007 Standing Committee registration forms is new for this meeting only.

**62 Thompson Avenue
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True Majority Canadian Governments

William Lyon Mackenzie King
John Diefenbaker
Brian Mulroney

Dates & Data

Also available on www.cfuwontcouncil.ca

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Submissions welcome

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