

**CANADIAN FEDERATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN  
ONTARIO COUNCIL**

**DATES & DATA**

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Ontario Council Newsletter  
Vol. VI, Issue 5 (Electronic)

March 2008  
Standing Committee Reports

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**March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2008**

**CFUW ONTARIO COUNCIL STANDING COMMITTEES**

**Joint Morning Session**

*STILL AIN'T SATISFIED: EQUITY AND FEMALE ATHLETES*

Speaker: Laura Robinson, author, playwright, journalist, athlete and coach

We were delighted to have Laura Robinson join us on this snowy morning from Port Elgin. Although much of what she had to say was deeply disturbing to hear, she herself had a positive outlook and encouraged us to learn and act wherever possible.

Laura described the world of competitive sports in Canada based on her experience as a competitive cyclist and cross-country skier. Starting in bicycle racing at age 14 at the Mississauga Cycling Club, she had numerous male and female mentors who encouraged her to develop her skills and to be confident in herself and in her body.

Laura described a number of situations where girls had 40-year old male coaches, one in particular, who used sex as control over the team members. A number of girl athletes, especially in cross-country skiing, were pressured into gradual starvation to have thin bodies, to the point where they ceased to menstruate. In some teams, girls who did not cooperate with sexual favours for coaches or sponsors did not get funding for the best equipment. Laura had to compete with a second-hand bike. Various attempts were made to make the men legally accountable, by charging them, but convictions were very difficult.

Laura's book, *Crossing the Line* came from her research into the links between aggressive male hockey players and rapes of girls. She cited a case in 1993 in Saskatchewan, where members of a hockey team gang-raped a girl, but were acquitted in a process that was a cover-up by police and lawyers. She found that similar situations happened in various small towns, where the raped girls received no legal or police assistance and were persecuted.

She developed a theory about the cycle of violence which she sees as beginning with the violence in junior male hockey, where some coaches molest young boys, who pass on the violence, in raping or sodomizing girls. She sees this pattern of teaching-learning violence in the military as well as in hockey, and often finds military men willing to speak about similar experiences.

Laura has made the film *Front Runners* about the aboriginal runners who ran the torch from St. Paul to Winnipeg for the 1967 Pan American Games only to have it taken from them and run into the stadium by white athletes. In 1999 when the Pan American Games returned to Winnipeg those same aboriginal runners returned to run the torch into the stadium. The men who made both runs described violence and atrocities

committed on children at their residential school in the 1960's, some related to competitive running. We learned a good deal of the athletic activities which Laura volunteers for at Cape Croker Reserve Elementary School. Cross-country skiing and cycling teams with donated equipment enjoy their sports. Her teams won prizes at the provincial cross-country skiing competition at Hardwood Hills this winter.

Question period was lively and raised a number of related issues, including the following:

- Women's hockey has made real progress, although there is manipulation of the image of some of the players. Laura deplors women athletes posing in "T and A" pictures. She questioned whether body-checking should be introduced into women's hockey as it would likely lead to a more violent sport.
- To get more women reporters in sports, we should petition the newspapers and the CBC.
- The question of the girls' ski jumping campaign for the 2010 Olympics was raised.
- There are more accredited women coaches at the local level, probably the majority, in women's sports. But at the higher levels, such as the World Cup, men are the coaches.
- On the topic of fitness and non-competitive children, Laura described her plans to get the Cape Croker children and families involved through finding donations of ordinary bikes and XC skis.
- She is interested in designing space for "moving bodies" within buildings, especially where people are car-dependent.
- Laura spoke of the preparation or lack of it for parents and young athletes to refuse sexual pressures and for parents to be more aware of the pitfalls of intensive coaching.

Here are a few references if you wish to follow up.

Books by Laura Robinson:

- *Great Girls: Great Canadian Athletes Who Just Happen to be Girls*
- *She Shoots, She Scores: Canadian Perspectives on Women in Sports*
- *Crossing the Line: Violence and Sexual Assault in Canada's National Sport*
- *Black Tights: Women, Sport and Sexuality.*

Laura also mentioned an article, *Violence in Amateur Hockey*, in MML periodical, Middlesex-London Health Unit, April 2007 by Dr. Graham Pollett, Medical Officer of Health, 50 King Street, London, ON N6A 5L7  
Email: [graham.pollett@mlhu.on.ca](mailto:graham.pollett@mlhu.on.ca)

## **STATUS OF WOMEN & HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE - Afternoon Session**

Because our afternoon meeting was cancelled, let me thank all the SW&HR committee members for their participation these last two years. I hope to see many of you at the AGM in North Bay. After that, there will be a new Chair.

If we had met on the 8<sup>th</sup>, we would have discussed the Provincial Conference "**Communities Working Together to End Violence Against Women**" attended by Arleen Midriak and me. The reports from Arleen and Judie are available on the website: [www.cfuwontcouncil.ca](http://www.cfuwontcouncil.ca) Click on Standing Committees then SW&HR. The reports are long, but well worth the time.

Our **End Violence Against Women Sub-Committee** will meet again April 5. We hope to continue meeting for a few months (or longer) to be able to recommend actions you and your Clubs might take on this subject.

I would encourage you all to read CFUW OC's **Pre-budget Brief** at the web site listed on the first page of News from January 30. It is an excellent brief and will help you and your issues group understand where we are all going. I especially recommend pages 11-12 *Violence Against Women & Girls*" - I would have handed out a copy of those pages last Saturday afternoon.

The Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care is asking our support to work further against big box daycare. See [www.childcareontario.org](http://www.childcareontario.org) then to “Its time for public child care campaign” and read about the issue and consider printing the available petition at “It's Time for Public Child Care Petition and Flyer.” If you are interested, print the petition, copy more and have them for your next Club meeting.

Happy reading to all of you.

Judie Arrowood, Chair  
Status of Women & Human Rights Committee  
[aarrowood@sympatico.ca](mailto:aarrowood@sympatico.ca)

### EDUCATION COMMITTEE - Afternoon Session

Due to the inclement weather the afternoon Education Committee was canceled. I will review what we were going to discuss so that you may still have an opportunity to work with your Club or issues group. As many of you may not continue in September I hope that you will pass the information on to your replacement.

Our discussion was to focus on Safe Schools Legislation – Bill 212 that came into effect on February 1, 2008.

The background for this is taken from the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario at [www.etfo.ca/IssuesinEducation/SafeSchools/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.etfo.ca/IssuesinEducation/SafeSchools/Pages/default.aspx)

Highlights include:

- **Board Policy Required** - school boards are required to develop and implement policies on bullying prevention and intervention.
- **Student Suspensions** – Principals may suspend students for a full day to 20 days.
- **Suspension for Bullying Behaviour**
- **Definition of Bullying** - Repeated, persistent, aggressive behaviour that is intended to cause harm or distress. Bullying can be physical, verbal, or social. This includes Cyber bullying through e-mail, cell phones, Internet, text messaging.
- **Teachers Right to suspend repealed**
- **Progressive Discipline** - Principals must consider all the circumstances around behaviour.
- **Mandatory Suspensions** – Principals must suspend students who: possess a weapon, use a weapon to threaten bodily harm, commit a physical assault, commit sexual assault, traffic in weapons or illegal drugs, commit robbery, give alcohol to a minor.
- **Suspension Appeals** – include student, principal, guardians or parents
- **Student Expulsions** - Under Bill 212, the principal may recommend that a student be expelled but the school board is solely responsible for expulsions
- **Teachers Right to Respond to Expulsion**
- **Special Programs for Suspended and Expelled Students** – School boards are to provide alternate programs for suspended and expelled students.

As we are a diverse group, I would hope that we could each acquire information about how different School Boards are putting into effect the new terms of the Safe Schools Act. I look forward to each of you bringing this information back to our committee meeting in September.

Wendy Taylor, Chair  
Education Committee

## LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - Afternoon Session

### The Weather-cancelled Afternoon Session on International Women's Day

This is the report of a Legislation Committee Meeting that would have been. You would have been thanked, whether you are a regular or sporadic member, for your energy and commitment in pursuing the issues that we have dealt with in the last two years. You would have been thanked for giving me as Legislation Chair your support and encouragement as together we continue to generate a vital and effective Ontario Council.

Myrtle Greve and Linda Hall would have been congratulated for their part in the Health Minister's decision to cancel the competitive bidding process for home care contracts until the policy is more carefully considered.

The Accessibility Questionnaire would have been answered as a step toward making our Clubs more inclusive. [Watch for it at [www.cfuwontcouncil.ca](http://www.cfuwontcouncil.ca) ]. Teri Shaw would have discussed poverty and CFUW OC's Pre-Budget Brief. [Click on Pre-Budget Brief at January 30, 2008 at <http://www.cfuwontcouncil.ca/issues%20annual%20briefs.html> ]. Linda MacGregor would have reviewed with us the ways action can be taken on CFUW and OC policy with the Government of Ontario, through briefs and letters to government officials, and presentations to legislative committees. Linda would have outlined how members can assist in this work, and reviewed how Clubs and individuals can reinforce the issues themselves. [See Advocacy Tools at <http://www.cfuwontcouncil.ca/issues.html> ]

You would have been reminded of the environmental issues that we have studied: pesticides, electronic waste, water, sewage and compliance, hazardous waste and packaging. I would have asked you for suggestions regarding appropriate action to take on behalf of OC. I would have promised to visit the Environment Minister (my own MPP, Hon. John Gerretsen) on your behalf, congratulate him on his election and cabinet appointment and on his recent environment initiatives, and raised topics of concern about which we have policy.

Very special thanks would have been given to our speakers who didn't speak – Linda MacGregor and Teri Shaw – and our recorder who didn't record at this meeting but has served so ably in the past – Peggy Pinkerton.

I pass my mantle on to the new Legislation Chair knowing that she will enjoy the association with this Committee and the challenge of working with powerful, talented and dedicated women. I trust that she will continue monitoring the LHINs and keeping an eye on environmental issues.

*Take action! Knead the dough!  
Become the yeast that gives life to the environment!*

M. Elaine Harvey, Chair  
Legislation Committee