



ONTARIO COUNCIL

Dates & Data

Ontario Council Newsletter

September 2005

Vol IV, Issue 1

FROM THE CFUW ONTARIO COUNCIL PRESIDENT



As a start to our 2005/06 CFUW year, wasn't it great to have been able to listen to Flora MacDonald (who received an Honorary CFUW Membership) and to Judy Rebick at the CFUW AGM in Oakville. These two women have left their mark on Canadian society and have opened up opportunities for Canadian females during the last four decades. Each has been fearless in her own area of political action. Of different generations and political persuasions they each encouraged us to engage in the world, and work to put in place the systems that will support equality and an improvement in the status of women world wide.

Today, Flora MacDonald's travel and development work with women in remote villages in Afghanistan illustrate that age is not an excuse to sit back in comfort. Judy Rebick told just how much the mentoring of the experienced women such as former CFUW President Dr. Laura Sabia supported the young radical feminists of the day to get organized, and opened doors for them to put women's rights and women's equality on government agendas. The women's movement made a lasting impact in Canada because diverse groups of women were able to work together.

The women in CFUW had a role to play in the nineteen sixties and we have a role to play today. In concert with like-minded organizations we too can use our intellect, our education, our compassion, and our relative familiarity with the political systems more to remove barriers, and to advance and maintain the equality of women in ways that make sense in this global age.

We have shown that we can do this. I commend and thank all our Ontario CFUW members who with their family and friends did just splendidly this spring and summer when the Ontario Government was all set to accept the recommendations of the Marion Boyd Report and allow religious arbitration tribunals, including Sharia in the resolution of family law matters. In the interest of women's equality we strongly disagreed. Bravo to our Club presidents who turned on a dime, and helped us to put the train in motion in their clubs and communities. Even after clubs had shut down for the summer, our members mobilized the immediate world around them, and acted with letters to the editor in local papers, with personal e-mails, phone calls, and visits to MPP constituency offices. The effort was worth it. Our members made the government think again. Acceptance of the Boyd recommendations has been postponed.

It is not over yet, of course. The Canadian Council of Muslim Women, LEAF, NAWL, METRAC, the YWCA and CFUW Ontario Council met with the

CFUW ONTARIO COUNCIL STANDING COMMITTEES

Saturday, September 17th, 2005

University Women's Club of Toronto
162 St. George Street, Toronto
416 979-2000

Morning Program

Will Tomorrow be Better?

A discussion about women and violence

Representatives from the Metropolitan Action Committee on Violence Against Women and Children (METRAC), Amnesty International, and a local Police Service will participate in a discussion about women and violence.

Registration 9:00 to 10:00 a.m.
(Preregistration is required for lunch)
Registration Form Enclosed
Meeting Begins 10:00 a.m.

Ontario Liberal Women's Caucus in May at Queen's Park voicing our opposition to the Boyd recommendations. Together with these women's groups we are planning next steps. The world is watching Ontario and what is being done on this issue. In Oakville, our CFUW sisters from the other provinces have resolved with us to exclude family law matters from their arbitration legislation. This is seen by many as the most important test since having had women's equality enshrined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. We have to see this through. We shall need your all-out support again soon .

Our CFUW Ontario Council also plans to look at and deal with other important matters "In Our Own Backyard". Check out the articles from the Standing Committee and Advocacy Chairs in this newsletter. Additional copies will be available from our website at www.cfuwontcouncil.ca.

We invite you to fasten your seatbelts and join us, starting with our September Standing Committee Meetings at the Toronto Club House on Saturday, September 17th. Everyone is invited, but please make sure that you book early, as the Club House has changed its manner of operation and you will no longer be able to register at the door on Saturday morning and be provided with lunch.

If you are new to Ontario Council, we have enclosed an information brochure for everyone. For any further questions, do not hesitate to ask me or any of our friendly executive members listed in that brochure. I look forward to greeting you, longterm attendees and newcomers alike. It promises to be an exciting Ontario Council year. You will all help us making it so.

Edeltraud Neal



2005 CFUW ONTARIO COUNCIL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

OUR THANKS TO CFUW STRATFORD

CFUW Ontario Council would like to thank CFUW Stratford and its LAC, under the leadership of Ernestine McKenna, for organizing the O/C AGM, which ran very smoothly and was attended by 186 women, including members from Thunder Bay, Ottawa, North Bay and even Ann Arbor, Michigan.

The theme for the two-day meeting was *Advocating for the Arts*, in keeping with Stratford's strong connection with the arts. The keynote speaker was Antoni Cimolini, Executive Director of the Stratford Festival, who gave an interesting talk on the theme and answered questions from his enthusiastic audience. There were also three workshops: *Linking the Community and the Arts*, with Pat Quigley of the Festival, *Developing a Music Festival in Your Community* with James Mason of the Grand River Baroque Festival, and *Arts Education Old and New* with Ron Dodson, Curriculum Co-ordination for secondary schools for the Avon-Maitland District School Board.

On Saturday evening, after the meeting and dinner at a restaurant adjacent to the theatre, 110 of the attendees attended a very well-received performance of *As you Like It* at the Festival Theatre

COMMITTEE CHAIRS' AGM WORKSHOP

At the 2005 Ontario Council AGM, the Chairs of the Standing Committees, as well as the Chair of the Ad Hoc Advocacy Committee and the Ontario Council President, held a workshop attended by approximately 80 Ontario Council members to determine issues of importance to the Clubs and their members. The results are as following:

Of Greatest Importance

- The Arbitration Act and its impact on women and family law (The CFUW Ontario Council response to the Boyd Review can be found at <http://www.cfuwontcouncil.ca/reports/boyd.pdf>)
- Water - clean water
- Education - follow up on funding for public & post-secondary
- Health - doctor/nurse shortage, home & palliative care
- Balance in life - child care, commuting, the environment

Other Concerns of Importance

Education: literacy (including adult), physical education for every student, school drop-outs, arts & specialty education, ESL, trade education, financial support for mature female students to university/college, stop fundraising, quality measurement



Health Care: Increased spaces for doctors in medical schools, delisting of services & pharmaceuticals

Water: selling of water

Women: Violence and the media, housing, tax and pensions for older retired women, women's poverty, problems of ethnic minorities, domestic violence, violence against & murder of Aboriginal women

Environment: Urban development, Wal-Mart,

quarry expansion, endangered species, brownfields, pesticides, waste management, recycling plastics, incineration

Children: child care, child pornography

Other: the future of libraries, gambling, new performing arts centre, Great Lakes - foreign species. Toronto area: infrastructure & financial future, public transportation, industrial diversity.



ABOUT OUR SEPTEMBER STANDING COMMITTEE MORNING PROGRAM

Will Tomorrow be Better?

A Discussion about Women and Violence

This issue continues to haunt us. It is something that haunts us, both at home and internationally. We will be focusing on the subject "in our own backyard", with speakers from METRAC, Amnesty International and a local police force. Here is some information for your consideration in preparation for the meeting.

"Since the end of World War II, egalitarian principles and the recognition of the universality of human rights have been the touchstone of international law. The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and other international law instruments are premised on the right to equality. Women's equality has been proclaimed numerous times, and many instruments have set out principles and specific mechanisms to give it practical effect, including the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* and the *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women*.

In Canada, formal recognition of women's equality rights was achieved in 1982 with the adoption of the *Charter* and more particularly with the inclusion of ss: 15 and 28, which provide equality rights for women and other historically disadvantaged groups. The introduction of the *Charter* has fundamentally altered Canadian law, since the primacy attributed to egalitarian values marks a break with the colonialist, pro-slavery, and patriarchal heritage of the common law and the civil law. By making equality a fundamental value in the Canadian Constitution, the constitutional reform initiated a radical rejection of a system of rights based on domination and subordination."

National Association of Women and the Law

- - -

"The physical and sexual abuse of girls and women costs the Canadian economy \$4.2 billion dollars each

year, factoring into account social services, criminal justice, lost employment days, and health care interventions. Nearly 90% of the financial cost is borne by government through our tax dollars.

Children who witness violence against their mothers are significantly more likely to develop aggressive behaviour (bullying, fighting) emotional disturbances (depression, continual fear, anxiety), criminal activity (destroying property, theft and vandalism) and experience negative effects on social and academic development. The majority of inmates in federal prisons with some history of committing violence against family members witnessed violence as children.

Immediate consequences for women

◆ **Death:** Worldwide, an estimated 40% to over 70% of homicides of women are committed by intimate partners, often in the context of an abusive relationship. Only a small proportion of men who are murdered are killed by their female partners, and in such cases the women usually are defending themselves or retaliating against abusive men.

◆ **Injury/permanent disability:** Violence is a major cause of injury to women, ranging from cuts and bruises to permanent disability and death. In Canada 43% of women injured by their partners had to receive medical care, and 50% of those injured had to take time off from work.

◆ Unwanted pregnancy/abortion.

◆ Sexually-transmitted infections, HIV/AIDS.

◆ Emotional trauma.

Long-term consequences for women

Women who have experienced physical or sexual abuse, as children or adults, are at greater risk of health problems, such as injury, chronic pain, gastrointestinal disorders, anxiety and clinical depression. Violence

also undermines health by increasing self-destructive behaviors, such as smoking and substance abuse. The influence of abuse can persist long after the abuse has stopped. Over their lifetimes, survivors of abuse average more surgeries, physician and pharmacy visits, hospital stays, and mental health consultations than other women, even after accounting for other factors affecting health care use, and discounting emergency room visits. Also, women who have been sexually assaulted and/or battered are significantly more likely than other women to commit suicide.

Political will

Over the past twenty years, governments have commissioned or funded literally hundreds of studies about violence against women. A high-profile example at the federal level alone is the \$10 million traveling commission, the Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women, which issued a national action plan with over a hundred recommendations in 1993. The women's movement has also been busy with documentation of the problem and the charting of effective solutions, as it is on the front line of mopping up the blood every day. Government has taken no action on the majority of the recommendations in these hundreds of reports, particularly in the areas of economic equality and housing which are fundamental necessities for women escaping abuse."

Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (www.criaw.icref.ca/factsheets/violence)

METRAC

The Metropolitan Action Committee on Violence Against Women and Children (METRAC) is a community organization that promotes the rights of women and children to live free from violence and the threats of violence. (www.metrac.org)

Working in collaboration with individuals, community groups, government agencies, police, educational institutions and legal and medical professions, METRAC helps build effective partnerships and coalitions of people interested in making their community a safer place.

OWJN is a project of METRAC. The goal of the Ontario Women's Justice Network (OWJN) is to promote an understanding of the law with respect to the issue of violence against women and children. They provide accessible legal information to women and their supporters in a manner that reflects the experiences and realities of women. They also review

and analyse written law (legislation) and case law (court decisions).

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Amnesty International is a worldwide movement of "ordinary" people who work together to achieve extraordinary results. Each day they stand in solidarity with - and help protect - individuals and communities around the world whose human rights are under attack.

They appeal for the violations to stop. They mobilize public pressure to prevent human rights abuses from taking place. (www.amnesty.ca)

Canadian officials have too long ignored the threat to Indigenous women in Canadian towns and cities. Many are missing, some have been murdered and Canadian authorities are not doing enough to stop the violence, says Amnesty International in a report, *Stolen Sisters: A Human Rights Response to Discrimination and Violence Against Indigenous Women in Canada*, recently released.

"All women have the right to live in safety and dignity but overt cultural prejudice and official indifference have put the Indigenous women of Canada in harm's way," says Irene Khan, Secretary General of Amnesty International. "As a priority, the Governments at all levels in Canada must work with Indigenous women in the country to ensure that no more 'sisters' are 'stolen' from their communities as the result of discrimination and violence."

POLICE SERVICES

Either York Regional Police or Metropolitan Toronto Police: Domestic Violence Unit will provide a speaker for the September 17th Standing Committee Meeting.

"Domestic Violence is a crime, which without intervention increases in severity and frequency," said Sgt. Lorna Kozmik, Domestic Violence Co-ordinator for the Community Programs Unit. "Prompt action, thorough investigation and referrals to other community assistance providers all play a part in unmasking this crime," Kozmik said.

The Toronto Police Service has produced a pamphlet for victims entitled, *Are You In An Abusive Relationship?* This pamphlet contains valuable referral information to other community assistance providers where victims can obtain ongoing support for themselves and their families.

**The Arbitration Act
CONTINUED ACTION NEEDED**

Please refer to the background material previously provided and continue your advocacy efforts. This is still an important active issue.

ADVOCACY, THE ONTARIO COUNCIL WAY

For the past three years Ontario Council has focussed on advocacy, with our current biennium theme being “In our own backyard”.

Our work is both proactive and reactive. Proactively, we send briefs to the Ontario Government, especially at Budget time, voicing our concerns and priorities. Reactively, we respond to the Government’s request for public input, as well reacting if we are concerned about the Government’s direction on a particular topic.

Last year we became very involved in the review of the Arbitration Act, the post-secondary education, the Great Lakes Draft Agreement (Ontario Council was invited to join the Advisory Panel) and the Greenbelt.

In this coming year of 2005-2006, many of the topics are still “on the front burner”:

- a decision concerning the Arbitration Act is forthcoming;
- the Great Lakes Draft Agreement is in the second round of public hearings;
- post-secondary education is the focus of this year’s Premiers’ Meeting;

We will be following all the developments, responding and continuing to ask for help from the Clubs. Ontario Council is also developing two other projects:

- Joan Dunn, Chair, Standing Committee on the Status of Women and Dr. Andrea Levan, RD Ontario North are initiating a study of services for battered women
- Sabina Auburger, Chair, Standing Committee on Legislation, and Wendy Taylor, CFUW Orillia are working on a study concerning high school dropouts and the community.

It should be an exciting year.

Teri Shaw, Chair
Ad Hoc Advocacy Committee

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Marianne Singh-Waraich, Chair

The Education Committee will welcome old and new members to its afternoon session. I will give an update on developments in the field of education



over the summer and introduce our focus for the year which will be the elementary and secondary panel. We will continue to track the post secondary funding developments but are planning to study the high school drop out rate which has risen to over 30%. Wendy Taylor of the Orillia Club has been studying this issue for some time and will speak of her findings. Wendy is interested in the community aspect of this issue. As a former educator, my own interest is in the education system's share of this problem and I have interviewed some administrators to that end and will share some preliminary findings. We hope to hear your input!

STATUS OF WOMEN COMMITTEE

Joan Dunn, Chair



Following our discussion of the morning on Violence against Women, we will continue the discussion and an exciting follow-up project. The project will be how we can get up to date information on work going on in 'our own backyard', by following up in our local communities. Andrea Levan, Regional Director North and Director of Women's Studies at Laurentian University, will be directing us in this project, which we will be undertaking over the next year.

LEGISLATION COMMITTEE

Sabina Auburger, Chair



The Legislation Committee afternoon session will begin with clubs sharing any actions taken in support of the campaign to exclude family law from the Arbitration Act and in support of the Draft Great Lakes Charter Annex Agreement. Clubs are invited to share the nature of action taken such as letter writing, visiting their MPs, and subsequent responses.

The trend of the privatization of law and the privatization of rape will be explored by the Legislation Committee. Some examples of the privatization of law include chronic under-funding of legal aid and informal dispute resolution. The trend of the privatization of law condones and accepts inequality, in non-compliance with sections 7, 15 and 28 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Informal dispute resolution withdraws the need for legal representation and public judicial decisions.

Equality and access to justice is essential to the rule of law. The decisions of judges provide public reasons supported by just rationales. The absence of public decisions may lead to the disenfranchisement of minority groups in Canadian society and consequently, does not contribute to the culture of democratic justification.

"Sexual assault is privatized when it is governed by legal doctrines that decriminalize predatory and injurious male sexual behaviour, treat the crime as an individual and gender-neutral deviation that carries no social consequences for the structuring of our society, and impose unconscionable burdens upon women who report male sexual violence to the criminal justice system."

Elizabeth Sheehy, ed., *Adding Feminism to the Law: The Contributions of Justice Claire L'Heureux-Dube* (Irwin Law, 2004)

The need continues to maintain pressure to counteract any reversion to gender-based myths through the manipulation of the law to re-privatize rape. The committee will discuss myths which enable the privatization of rape and how advocacy for the adequate funding of legal aid, for both criminal and family law, may be a substantive action to support the resistance of the privatization of rape and the privatization of law.

APPLICABLE CFUW POLICY

LEGAL AID IN CANADA,

2003 - CFUW Charlottetown

RESOLVED, That the Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) urge the federal, provincial and territorial governments of Canada to enact "access to justice" legislation which will ensure that adequate legal aid is an integral component of the Canadian justice system; and

RESOLVED, That CFUW urge the federal, provincial and territorial governments of Canada to work collaboratively to establish regulations and standards which would define, and guarantee, effective and accessible civil legal aid throughout Canada, and to ensure the necessary funding to maintain these regulations and standards.

THE "LETTER TO THE EDITOR" AS AN ADVOCACY TOOL

The "Letter to the Editor" offers an opportunity for advocacy. The "Letter to the Editor" section of a newspaper is the most widely read section of the newspaper. It is a communication tool which can be used effectively to educate the external public on highly complicated issues. It is particularly effective

when CFUW Ontario Council urges the general public to contact their MPP on a specific issue.

For example, the CFUW-Orangeville & District president, Brenda Stephen, sent the local MPP, John Tory, an open letter on the Boyd Review of the Arbitration Act based on CFUW Ontario Council policy. Brenda Stephen indicated in the letter, that it is being sent to both local newspapers, The Orangeville Citizen and The Banner. The open letter was published in both local newspapers. The fact that the open letter was sent to the local media, elicited an immediate response from the MPP. The CFUW-Orangeville Letter to the Editor motivated a non-CFUW reader to write a letter to Michael Bryant, the Attorney General of Ontario.

The characteristics of a good "Letter to the Editor" for successful publication includes the following:

- ▶ statistics
- ▶ a quotation
- ▶ facts
- ▶ relevancy to the community
- ▶ timely in being relevant to current trends and hot issues in the community
- ▶ writing succinctly
- ▶ writing in a flat tone; not in an angry tone
- ▶ include complete contact information should the press require confirmation of information.

A Letter to the Editor to the Toronto Star, is followed up by a telephone call from the Toronto Star Editorial Board to confirm the letter writer actually sent the Toronto Star a letter. The Toronto Star Editorial Board will leave a message on the answering machine, should there be no one home. A deadline is given for the confirmation response. The date of the publication of the Letter to the Editor is offered during the confirmation phone call. It is fortuitous to have a Letter to the Editor published in a Sunday edition. The Sunday edition has the highest readership.

CFUW members are also successful with the publication of "Letters to the Editor" written as private citizens, making no reference to CFUW, as only CFUW club presidents may write letters based on CFUW policy.

Sabina Auburger

CFUW Ontario Council 2005 2006 RESOLUTIONS SCHEDULE

Oct 14 th	Intent to present a resolution
Nov 18 th	Resolution Due Date
Jan 13 th	Resolutions sent to Clubs
Mar 11 th	Amendments Due
Mar 31 st	Final Version to Clubs
May 13 th	Vote at AGM

CFUW ONTARIO COUNCIL REGIONAL FALL GATHERINGS

ONTARIO EAST

Date: **October 15th** Host Club: CFUW Belleville & District
Location: St. Thomas Anglican Church, 201 Church Street, Belleville
Theme: *Our Water - What is Happening*
Speaker: Theresa McClenaghan, Counsel to the Canadian Environmental Association

ONTARIO NORTH

Date: **October 15th** Host Club: CFUW Sudbury
Location: TBA
Theme: *Creative Women*

ONTARIO SOUTH

Date: **October 22nd** Host Club: CFUW Milton & District
Location: Graham Hall, St Paul's United Church, 123 Main Street East, Milton
Theme: *Fall Fun and Fundamentals*
Contact: Kathy Sellers kathleensellers@hotmail.com

ONTARIO CENTRAL

Date: **November 5th** Host Club: UWC Toronto
Location: Toronto Club House, 162 St. George Street, Toronto
Theme: *Women - Working Effectively*
Morning Program
Workshop: • *Urgently Required!! - Leaders in Our Clubs!!*
Presenter: Linda MacGregor, Regional Director
Workshop: • *Will Partnering Make CFUW More Effective?*
Presenter: Margaret McGovern, Chair, CFUW Status of Women & Human Rights Committee
Workshop: • *Making ConneXions with our Elected Officials*
Presenter: Kathleen Wynne MPP, Don Valley West

Luncheon Speaker: Marilyn Churley MPP, Toronto-Danforth
Panel Discussion: *Women in Politics*
Panelists: Marilyn Churley MPP, Toronto-Danforth
Rosemary Speirs - Equal Voice

ONTARIO WEST

Date: **November 12th** Host Club: CFUW Orangeville & District
Location: TBA
Theme: *Sustainability*

HELP WANTED!

A feasibility study on implementing a Public Relations Ad Hoc Committee/Task Force is being undertaken. Participation in the discussions of Public Relations and CFUW/Ontario Council is welcomed by CFUW members with MBA's, expertise in journalism, media relations, marketing, and public relations

Please contact, Sabina Auburger, cfuwontariocouncil@yahoo.com.



Beatrice Deadman & Myrtle Greve

80 Years and Going Strong

Hamilton's CFUW Club celebrated 80 years of power from 1925 to 2005 with a combined annual meeting and birthday party on May 12, 2005. Speaking of numbers, Hamilton has 10 members who have been with the club for 50 years. We made a special effort to honour these women with corsages and CFUW National President Rose Beatty presented them with beautiful certificates at our 80th anniversary. Honoured also were past presidents of C.F.U.W. - Hamilton, who were asked to stand and be recognized. We found a dozen birthday cards featuring the age of 80 and these were fastened to the fireplace along with 80 facts about our club which were printed and pinned around the room. These facts stirred up lots of interest in our social hour before the actual program. Hamilton is able and ready to go on for another 80 years!

Marilyn Hill

Stratford Member Honoured

We were pleased to learn that Sheila Clarke, CFUW Stratford member and past CFUW National Legislation Chair, was listed among the winners in the 12th Annual Stratford in Bloom Competition in the Pesticide Free category.

Oakville Welcomes All

CFUW Oakville is pleased to announce that Paula Todd, popular co-host of *Studio 2*, TV Ontario's current events program, and host and co-producer of "Person 2 Person with Paula Todd" will be our special guest speaker at a Luncheon Scholarship Fundraiser for the University Women of Oakville Scholarship Fund, Saturday, October 29th at the Oakville Club, 56 Water Street Oakville.

Social time at 11:30am, luncheon at 12:30pm. Book signing after the luncheon. A portion of the sale of *A Quiet Courage* will also be donated to our Scholarship Fund.

Luncheon tickets (purchased in advance) are \$35.00 (including a \$10 receipted donation, as requested). Tickets will be available at the September Ontario Council meeting or by arrangement. Tickets will also be available through Bookers Bookstore in Oakville. This is an open event.

A Quiet Courage: Inspiring Stories from All of Us is a deeply affecting book that offers a potentially life changing way to view, handle and process what can be the most difficult challenges of our lives. Advocacy in action is all about change. Paula will inspire us with stories about change from within. Please join us for this inspiring afternoon.

Susan Walkinshaw,
swalk@targetmarketingcorp.com

CFUW ONTARIO COUNCIL
2006 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
May 12th and 13th, 2006
Holiday Inn, Burlington, Ontario
Celebrating Lives of Girls and Women
Mark you calendar now
& watch for further information!

Dates & Data
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www.cfuwontouncil.ca cfuwontario@yahoo.com
Ann McElhinney
Editor
annmce@look.ca
Submissions welcome - Please advise of any changes, additions or deletions to our mailing list

