



ONTARIO COUNCIL

Dates & Data

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Well, the federal election is over for now and we do have a new Conservative government. 64 women MPs, 20.8 percent of all the members in the House of Commons. 11.3 percent of Conservative MPs are women, female Liberal MPs make up 20.4 percent, the Bloc 31.4 percent and the NDP 41.4 percent of their respective party's seats. We congratulate these 64 women on their electoral success and hope that they will bring their female perspective to their party's work. Among those we congratulate are also two women from Toronto ridings who have been panelists on the challenges of women in elections and in politics at our Standing Committee Meetings at the Toronto Club House. Peggy Nash, NDP, elected to the Commons for the first time and Dr. Carolyn Bennett, recent Minister of Public Health, who has been re-elected. When at our meeting, Peggy Nash felt that power was better than influence: it gets things done. We hope that all 64 women MPs will use their power and influence to get things done.

What will the national election result mean for CFUW here in Ontario? It is too early to say. It may mean back to square one with child care and early learning programs and other social policies and programs flowing from the social transfer. It will definitely mean encouraging our Ontario government to work together with the new federal government in areas with shared federal - provincial funding that are important to women and families, such as public health care, home care, child care, education and training, post-secondary education, affordable housing, conditions in native reserves, poverty, gun violence, Kyoto and the environment.

At our January 14th Standing Committee Meeting an overflow crowd of members from across the province came to the Toronto Club House to engage with the compelling expert speakers on emergency management and women, and public health care and the myths of the meaning of the Chaoulli Supreme Court decision. (see report inside) Both areas will need our close attention in our own backyards and in the province. Do you know how emergency management works in your community? What are the most likely emergency risks for your community? Are women involved in the management decision making? Thank you to Sabina Auburger, Legislation, for organizing the morning session and to Joan Dunn, Status of Women & Human Rights and Marianne Singh-Waraich, Education for their afternoon programs on freedom of expression and hot education topics.

January saw the election of CFUW/Kitchener - Waterloo member Ardith Toogood, CFUW Director of Strategic Planning, to CFUW President. I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate Ardith on behalf of myself and CFUW/Ontario Council on her election success. We all have very best wishes and the hope that under Ardith's leadership CFUW will grow Canada-wide in membership and profile, and progress further in being a democratic, transparent equality seeking women's organization that is open to diversity.

At this time, I also would like to offer my heartfelt appreciation and thanks to all the Clubs and individual members who encouraged and supported my candidacy and who gave me their trust and their vote. Merçi.

Edeltraud Neal

Next Standing Committee Meetings March 4th - *Current Issues in Education*
www.cfuwontcouncil.ca for Registration Form

JANUARY 14TH, 2006
JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING SPEAKERS

The joint Standing Committee morning session was treated to detailed and fact-filled presentations on Health, Safety and Welfare, focusing on response to disasters and the implications of the recent Supreme Court Chaoulli decision.



Tracey Croft, Emergency Management Coordinator, County of Dufferin, described the wake-up call for the need for local emergency planning offered by recent local disasters, notably the ice storm of 1998, and the perceived Y2K emergency. Prior to this, municipalities were supposed to have emergency plans, but most did not. 9/11 spurred provincial legislation requiring municipalities to have emergency plans and setting up a new agency to liaise between levels of government. The plans must deal with prevention and mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. Demands are made on municipalities: they must assess the risks in their own communities, appoint their own management coordinators and committees, train employees and volunteers, designate critical buildings and other infrastructure and provide an annual review. (Ms. Croft admitted that in Dufferin the

police and fire departments and sewage treatment plants are all located on a flood plain, which would not be permitted under the new legislation.) A weakness in the new plan is that it lacks teeth: there are no penalties or fines, only the threat of litigation, and no professional standards are defined. The SARS crisis and blackout of 2003 led to refinement and expansion of the legislation, including health risk as a recognized disaster and imposing fines on corporations who interfere with emergency measures, and increased warning systems. There are still problems, such as the need for more consideration of vulnerable populations, application of standards and raising awareness in the public, and problems of municipalities in finding funding for the required initiatives. There are not many women in emergency management decision making positions because they do not occupy high enough positions in the command of police services, fire departments, etc.

Tracey Croft has provided us with her complete presentation on emergency management in Ontario, which is an excellent source of information on what the emergency management situation in Ontario is today. If you want to follow up with this topic in your Club, contact cfuwontario@yahoo.com
For more info see also <http://www.mpss.jus.gov.on.ca/> (EMO)



Dr. Joni Seager is Dean of Environmental Studies at York, and an expert in feminist environmentalism. Her talk countered the notion that disasters are gender neutral. Referring to recent natural disasters - in the 1991 Bangladesh flood, the 1995 Kobe earthquake, the recent Pakistan earthquake, tsunami and Katrina floods, many times more women, especially poor women, than men were victims. Why? In many parts of the world women are often isolated in their homes, without communication, responsible for children, in poorly-constructed buildings and are caught without protection or warning. Furthermore, the aftermath of disasters impacts women differently: in the recovery period there is usually a spike in violence against women, women's hygiene needs are less likely to be met, women's employment recovery slower, as women are less likely to be involved in immediate

rebuilding and recovery. Dr. Seager feels that not only the physical but psychological impact of disasters on women is greater than on men, and should be recognized.



Dr. Colleen Flood, New Zealand-born associate professor of law at U of T and a student of comparative health care policy, gave a scathing critique of the recent Supreme Court Chaoulli decision overturning Quebec’s ban on private health insurance. She cites great uncertainty caused by the even split among the judges, and acknowledges that some see the Supreme Court as heroes, and some as villains. She feels that the Court got it wrong, and that while the decision might be good as law, it is not good public policy. She faults the Court for ignoring the policy research done by Romanow and Kirby, both of whom recommend a single-pay system. Dr. Flood concentrated her remarks on wait times, and noted that countries with combined public and private health care, (New Zealand, Spain, U.K., Ireland), have longer wait times than ours, and in countries with short wait times (France, U.S.) it is because many cannot access medical care at all. Wait times are determined by a shortage of doctors and nurses, and training new personnel for the pool is lengthy and expensive; in trying to recruit from other countries we are in competition with others who can pay more.

Her criticisms of private care:

1. Private care tends to cover only the “easy” things - hip and knee replacements, etc., leaving the “hard” things to the public system.
2. Governments can fix wait lists by better organization
3. Essential care should be on the basis of need, not ability to pay.

Peggy Pinkerton

LEGISLATION COMMITTEE REPORT

Sabina Auburger, chair

The Legislation Committee afternoon meeting was attended by 29 members from the following Clubs:

North York	London	Guelph	Orillia
Peterborough	Leaside-East	Mississauga	Etobicoke
Orangeville	YorkBurlington	Milton	Scarborough
Belleville	Hamilton	Vaughan	Aurora-Newmarket
Stratford	St. Catharines	Muskoka	Northumberland
Oakville	Kitchener-Waterloo	Ottawa	

Carolee Bailey, CFUW-Burlington delivered an excellent presentation. It was a report on the local initiatives of the Action Plan for the national resolution: *Inclusion of Chronic Home Care Services Under the Canada Health Act*. CFUW-Burlington and CFUW-Hamilton have actively participated in three local initiatives: the Inclusive Cities Canada report, monitoring the development of the Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs) and educating members and the general public by arranging for high profile health care speakers and public forums.

The development of Ontario regional health authorities, referred to as LHINs is of particular concern. Bill 36, Local Health System Integration Act, 2005, appears to allocate funding on the basis of a performance agreement with public health care providers such as hospitals, community health centres, Community Care Access Centers (CCAC). However, the bill does not include family doctors, chiropodists, dentists, optometrists, independent health facilities, laboratories, public health and for-profit medical clinics. The intention of the Bill is to create an integrated health system, without the inclusion of the mix of health providers.

The Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (MOHLTC) appears to be creating a market-based pricing system which seems to pit “wait times” against home care services. Until the LHINs mature, it is too early to tell how effective they will be in the planning, funding and integrating health care services at the local level.

Carolee Bailey, summarized, what members should take back to their Clubs, from the Action Plan on the Home Care resolution:

1. Read the resolution and background carefully.
2. Check if the policy resonates with the club members.
3. Educate the public on a validated issue which will only worsen.

March 21st, 2006 CFUW-Hamilton will have Dr. Jane Aronson, as the speaker for their general meeting speaking on “Home Care and Its Implications for Women: An Update on Policy Development.” Dr. Aronson, Director of the Department of Social Work at McMaster University, is a prominent researcher and writer on seniors’; issues.

- Inclusive Cities Burlington Full Report is available in pdf format at www.cdhalton.ca
- The national Inclusive Cities Report is available at www.inclusivecities.ca
- The book, *Prescription for Excellence: How Innovation is Saving Canada’s Health Care System*, by Dr. Michael Rachlis is available in pdf format at www.michaelrachlis.com
- for the complete CFUW-Burlington and Hamilton presentation on the Action Plan for the resolution: Inclusion of Chronic Home Care Services Under the Canada Health Act e-mail cfuwontario@yahoo.com

Learnings and Insights: The Legislation Committee heard about a health care public forum organized by CFUW members through another agency. Some members indicated they would have attended this public forum if they heard about it. Please share any information about public forums, conferences and other educational events which would help keep CFUW members informed on issues.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT ***Marianne Singh-Waraich, Chair***

Thirty people attended the meeting. The twenty-two Clubs represented were:

Orangeville	Mississauga	Kanata	Ottawa
Toronto	Vaughan	Scarborough	London
Northumberland	Leaside East York	Niagara Falls,	Etobicoke
Oakville	Hamilton	Kitchener-Waterloo	Milton
Belleville	St Catherines	North York	
Burlington	Aurora-Newmarket	Orillia	

Margaret Gray from Milton volunteered to take the minutes. Thank you Margaret!

Highschool drop out rate:

At the last meeting I had asked for Clubs to investigate local conditions in their school boards. Orangeville, Burlington, Hamilton, London, Aurora Newmarket, Oakville, North York, Belleville and Orillia reported the results of their investigations. It is very interesting to compare these local conditions that feed into the provincial average because they display a wide variety. We will use these reports when we do our position paper in the spring. I encourage other Clubs to do the same so we get a better picture of the situation on the ground and how it varies. A great variety of plans are being implemented at the local level to improve the situation. Thank you for providing handouts to share with other Clubs. It allows them to better report to their home Clubs. If you gave an oral report, would you be kind enough to send me a written one as well at mariannevaraich@primus.ca ?

People for Education Conference.

I reported on the conference at York University on November 5th by means of a handout. For details on the conference and general current information, see the excellent website of www.peopleforeducation.com.

Marianne Singh-Waraich

STATUS OF WOMEN AND HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE REPORT

Joan Dunn, Chair

There were thirty-six attendees at the afternoon session, representing twenty-three Clubs. Some Clubs had 2 and 3 representatives.

North York	Cobourg/Port Hope	Etobicoke	Hamilton
Burlington	Leaside/East York	North Toronto	Georgetown
Kitchener/Waterloo	Aurora/Newmarket	Orangeville	Toronto
Oakville	Scarborough	Ottawa	Peterborough
Belleville & District	Mississauga	Guelph	Ajax-Pickering
Niagara Falls	Milton	Orillia	

FREEDOM TO READ

Gabriele Lundeen

Gabriele Lundeen, former CEO of the Toronto Public Library and CEO of the Southern Ontario Library System was the guest speaker at our January 14th afternoon session. She is a board member of *Freedom to Read* and is also Chair of the *Freedom of Expression Committee* which Margaret Laurence and Margaret Atwood started in the late '70s. The parent organization is the Book and Periodical Council.

The afternoon session was a dialogue with Gabriele answering questions from members. The discussion revolved around the role of *Freedom to Read*. We learned that they produce teaching aids and posters for distribution to schools and libraries and that *Freedom to Read Week* is February 26 to March 4, 2006. Their website has all the kits on it except for the most recent which is sold for 6 months first. Website: www.freedomtoread.ca

As well, Ms Lundeen pointed out that:

- Libraries receive requests each year to remove books from the shelves. In the Toronto system about 30 to 40 such requests per year are received. Many more are suggested, but to be seriously considered one must complete a form to request removal of a book and most people do not comply. Most requests are rejected.
 - common reasons for requesting removal of books are obscenity or political correctness
 - examples of some books are the Babar and the Dr. Seuss series (read these with a new consciousness), also books dealing with same sex relationships
- A library has only so much money and has to buy for the community; they choose not to buy for the edges of the community
- a library has a large area of true crime books (this came up in response to a question regarding the Mahaffy/French murders); *Karla* fits into this category. A library has to be sensitive to the community; on the other hand if a sensitive book is in the library one could choose not to read it or one could choose to buy it themselves in a bookstore. The Burlington library chose to pull this book from the shelves.
- Toronto Public Library System has a policy that 15% has to be Canadian material; many communities don't have a similar policy.

Your Public Library: Something to Offend Everyone.

- Corporations are censoring; they hold a strict point of view and are not open an exchange of ideas.
- Laws covering hate literature are open to interpretation.
- Where freedom of expression conflicts with protecting peoples' rights: where do you draw the line?

Self-Censorship

The *Freedom to Read* annual review's topic this year is self-censorship. Gabriele pointed out that it is important that we struggle with issues; there shouldn't be an easy solution: who sets our standard? who has the right to censor? where? In what country? Freedom of speech vs. community standards; what community? What is in the constitution? In the Charter? How do we interpret?

Issues to be considered:

- Political correctness has an impact on freedom of expression, e.g.: a school board has list of 300 expressions that are not allowed to be used.
- There is a gender issue as well in freedom of expression; Little Sisters Bookstore was censored but *Penthouse* was exported the next month with no problems. Little Sisters Bookstore has been in court for 15 years.
- Border crossing guards can stop anything they feel is inappropriate.
- The media set their own standards. In addition, the telecommunications company, Telus cut off a union website for when they were in a strike position. It was up again in 3 days with excuses.
- Internet filtering is being used by more organizations; some libraries filter computers in the children's department and not in the adults'; others do all computers. Most filtering is done by IT departments, not by librarians.
- People want warning stickers on books now, similar to movie ratings. It was suggested by the Status of Women committee members in attendance that it is better to have stickers than to remove books from the shelf. Gabriele Lundeen gave an example of books in the gay-lesbian section at the Toronto Public Library that were identified with rainbow stickers and because they were easily identifiable that section of books was defaced.

“Censorship is alive and well”

Helen Sami & Joan Dunn

!! 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 2007 Ontario Council AGM in Peterborough.

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

!! PLAN TO ATTEND !!

CFUW Ontario Council AGM 2006
Celebrating Lives of Girls and Women

May 12th and 13th 2006

Hosted by CFUW Burlington
at the
Holiday Inn
3063 South Service Road, Burlington

Dates & Data : Also available on www.cfuwontcouncil.ca

Submissions Welcome - Please advise of any changes, additions or deletions to our mailing list cfuwontario@yahoo.com