

ONTARIO COUNCIL

Dates & Data

Ontario Council Newsletter

February 2004 Issue

From the CFUW Ontario Council President



Today, in brilliant sunshine and under a sky azure as far as the eye can see, and puddles forming here and there, even snow covered Ottawa gives the distinct glimpse that there might be an end to the long cold winter... eventually. While club meetings had to be cancelled because of winter storms, the frigid weather did not dampen CFUW members' spirits who came from all across Ontario to attend our January Standing Committee Meetings and who filled the Toronto Club House to overflow capacity. Your Ontario Council Executive is certainly pleased when its efforts receive such an excellent response. Our panel on the various aspects of university education today was certainly timely. (Read the report on page 4)

I was surprised to open the *Ottawa Citizen* which is running a big spread series called "The Lost Boys" during the week of February 9th, examining the situation of educationally "disadvantaged" male students in relation to their female

counterparts. I'd recommend and hope that you'll have a chance to read these *Citizen* special reports. They are instructive on how the case is put to the general public. It is interesting that this excellent series on the status of women has to highlight boys in order to merit an A section place in the paper. The articles point out that girls do better in school and that women are overly represented in universities and better educated than their male contemporaries generally. The many problems that males encounter because of their difficulties with education makes some call for affirmative action in favor of males.

So it looks like CFUW clubs' decades of advocacy for the education for all but particularly for women and girls and supporting club scholarships for women have paid off. Or have they? In spite of their academic excellence at all levels women, relative to their numbers and their education, have not been able to take their place equally and fully as leaders in society and in universities. It seems that education alone will not get women there.

It is time for us to examine to a greater degree also some of the systems and structures in place in society that hold girls and women back. Do come and join us at our March 6 Standing Committee Meetings at the Toronto Club House, when Nathalie Des Rosier, our lively guest speaker from the Canadian Law Reform Commission will explore this topic.

What's Inside . . .

- Standing Committee Reports & Registration
- Ontario Council AGM 2004 Information
- Ontario Council Dues Question (2003/2004 Budget Enclosed)

Next month's celebrations of International Women's Day will highlight the advances women have made in many fields. Some newspapers will also tell us where the women's movement has failed. Some will proclaim advocates for women's rights dead, out of fashion and not needed. Let us not be distracted. CFUW has never followed fads, we'll just keep looking at the root causes of the social and economic inequities and we'll keep

chipping away at them in education, in health care, in housing, in violence against women, in..... the list goes on.

Happy International Women's Day, and to the Irish amongst us, Happy St. Patrick's Day. Spring just cannot be far .

Edeltraud Neal

* 2004 *

**ONTARIO COUNCIL
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

CHANGES: Reviewing the Past Mapping the Future

Friday May 14th **7:30 to 10:30 p m**
UWC Club House

Evening Reception

Saturday May 15th **8:30 a m to 5:00 p m**
Victoria College

Business Meeting
Regional Meetings
Presidents' Workshop
Afternoon Workshops

Workshop Topics

Child Poverty - Violence Against Women - Drinking Water Quality
Child advocacy & the Youth Criminal Justice Act

2005 ONTARIO COUNCIL DUES INCREASE?

At our January Standing Committee Meetings we announced that CFUW Ontario Council Executive is contemplating an Ontario Council dues increase. We asked for representatives from the five regions to be part of a task force to look at our Ontario Council finances and study the impact a dues increase would have on the clubs.

Several years ago, your Ontario Council Executive decided that it would not be fair to ask Ontario clubs for higher Council dues as long as we still had a substantial amount of money in our reserve. It was felt that only six months operation funds needed to remain in reserve. As a consequence our dues have remained \$2.50 for many years in spite of the higher cost of putting on our events. We are now coming close to that six months reserve limit.

The most important purpose of Ontario Council is to bring our Ontario clubs together in friendship to explore, learn about and discuss improved education, the status of women and girls and human rights in all areas. We meet to motivate and encourage each other to advocate in a concerted way with CFUW policy on these issues in our province. So our yearly budget is used for Ontario Council activities like putting on the three Standing Committee Meetings at the Toronto Club House, the Ontario Council AGM, leadership workshops at Regional Gatherings, for your newsletter and advocacy and for the administrative and executive expenses needed to organize these events and activities.

Your dues help pay for and we all enjoy the lovely meeting facilities at the Toronto Club House. Your memberships allows us to bring in excellent speakers for you. We want to make it possible for our meetings to be truly representative of our province, so we help

participants from all clubs more than 75 km away from Toronto with the travelling cost to the Standing Committee meetings. We also support the clubs with 50 members or less to attend either the CFUW or Ontario Council AGM with amounts up to the total of a clubs Ontario Council dues. We give grants, seed money to individual clubs for special projects that will give that club profile in the community as well as to the clubs hosting the Regional Gatherings each year. Special club support is given to Thunder Bay club to be able to meet with the rest of us at least once every biennium. It is important that our federation not lose these voices from the outlying and northerly regions.

Regional representation applies also to your Ontario Council Executive. For example, your Education Chair is from Windsor whereas your president comes from Ottawa. Your Executive members, Regional Directors, Legislation, Education and Status of Women & Human Rights Standing Committee Chairs spend a lot of time and effort on your behalf. So it is only right that they should receive some financial support to travel to board meetings, Ontario Council meetings and events.

Education and development of your Ontario Council leaders cannot be ignored, so we subsidize our Regional Directors' expenses to travel to the CFUW AGM. We would like to be able to give financial support also to your hard working Standing Committee Chairs to attend the CFUW AGM where CFUW policy is made.

In order to fund Ontario Council fully from membership dues, these will need to be raised by a minimum of \$ 2.50 per member. The increase would come into effect in February of 2005.

We are aware that the CFUW National Board

decided also to propose an increase in CFUW dues to clubs. Information about the proposed National dues increase will be sent to you by National.

In spite of a looming possible National dues increase, we hope that your club will look favourably on an Ontario Council dues increase

should it be proposed in time for the May AGM. In the meantime, we are enclosing the 2003/04 budget that you approved at the 2003 AGM and we should be very pleased to know what you think about an Ontario Council dues increase. If you think that there should not be a dues increase, which expenses would you like to cut?

We'd love to hear from you.

Edeltraud Neal



STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT

January 17th, 2004

The morning session featured a panel discussion on Access to Higher Education, organized by the Education Committee, and attended by all three Committees. Participants were Erika Shaker, from the Education Project of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, Charles C. Smith, equality adviser to the Canadian Bar Association, and first equity adviser to the Law Society of Upper Canada, and Sylvia Bashevkin, professor of political science, director of Canadian Studies at University College, and writer on women's issues. The panel focused on how cutbacks to higher education impact on accessibility, especially by women and minority groups, at the undergraduate and professional levels, and as faculty.

Erika Shaker's Education Project follows trends and priorities in higher education, and analyzes and ranks universities on four standards: quality, accessibility, public accountability and affordability. It is particularly interested in public commitment to universities, and monitors how government decisions play out in university rankings. Ms. Shaker feels that the wider community has lost control of its institutions of higher education. A particular concern is the increasing influence of private money, and the

way in which funds are directed toward programs with foreseeable economic benefits, at the expense of less lucrative programs in humanities and social sciences. This impacts on women, who are more widely represented in these programs. Furthermore, tuition fees are too high (only the U.S. and Japan have higher) so that students graduate with unacceptable debt levels. This too is especially hard on women, who on average require 28 years to repay their student loans, as opposed to 15 years for men. She urges us to take back our schools, to provide the community standards we want. Erika's report, *Missing Pieces*, can be found at www.policyalternatives.ca. Take the links to Publications Catalogue and then choose Education.

Charles Smith, whose area is legal education, dealt with the U of T's recent decision to increase law school fees from \$8000 to \$22000, and the study the university undertook that led to this decision. He criticized the methodology of the study, in that it did not consult with students, prospective students, or graduates as to the impact of the increased fee pay-back on their career choices. The change in fee structure, with its long-term burden of debt-repayment, serves to ensure

the status quo: traditionally disadvantaged groups - women, aboriginals, students from low-income families, are effectively shut out from considering a legal education. Those who do enter law school often have their choices curtailed: it becomes impracticable for them to consider less well-paid areas of law - family, poverty law, legal aid, legal clinics (often areas that appeal to women) and opt for the high paid careers in Bay Street corporate law firms in order to relieve their debt loads. This choice is often disadvantageous for women and minorities, as they as a rule suffer in large firms: there are substantial wage gaps between women and men, and between whites and blacks at every age and experience level. A related concern is the move to replace the Bar Admission Course, which gave law graduates experience in minority areas of legal practice (e.g. human rights law, family law), with a U.S. style licensing exam. Mr. Smith sees this as further pushing students into large law firms simply through lack of experience with alternatives. For more information, see

<http://www.cba.org/CBA/Equality/Equality/default.asp>.

Sylvia Bashevkin is concerned about the under-representation of female academics in the assignment of Canada Research Chairs. The Canada Research Chairs program was established by the federal government to help reverse the

brain drain, and while the concept is welcomed, the complaints are that the selection criteria for recipients or universities are not transparent, and that most of the Chairs are in fields with relatively few women professors, with the result that only 17% of the recipients have been women. Furthermore, regional development concerns have come into play, so that some Chairs have been assigned in less deserving non-research institutions in order to give regional representation. She described a campaign by eight female university professors, located across the country from Simon Fraser U. to University of New Brunswick, to initiate a human rights complaint to gain a measure of equity and transparency to the process. She urged CFUW to support these professors through measures including lobbying our MP's and the Industry Minister, complaining to the press and our university (possibly tying donations to a change in policy) or inviting one of the eight to speak to our club. An excellent source of information is <http://www.unb.ca/PAR-L/CRCcomplaint.htm> . The Ontario professors involved are Audrey Kobayashi, Queen's University and Michele Ollivier, Université d'Ottawa

Dr. Bashevkin joined the other speakers in deploring the cutting of government funding to universities, leading to an increasing privatization of higher education.

Peggy Pinkerton

ADVOCACY AWARD

Has your club written letters to MP's or MPP's? Been involved in local campaigns? Held in-club public education programs? You might be eligible for one of the Advocacy Awards. Submissions are due **May 30th**. Copies of the Advocacy Award Tracking Sheet are available at <http://www.wlu.ca/~wwwlib/oncouncil/tracking.pdf> We are one of Canada's largest women's organizations. We need to let our world know our concerns.

MARCH 6TH STANDING COMMITTEE JOINT MORNING SESSION

We are fortunate to have Nathalie Des Rosiers, President of the Law Commission of Canada speak to us at our meeting on March 6, 2004.

Nathalie is a Professor of Law, on leave from the Faculty of Law at the University of Ottawa. From 1987 to 2000, Ms. Des Rosiers was a Faculty member at the Faculty of Law, University of Western Ontario. She was Law Clerk to Justice Julien Chouinard at the Supreme Court of Canada from 1982 to 1983 and in private practice until 1987.

Ms. Des Rosiers is a Past-President of the Association des juristes d'expression française de l'Ontario (AJEFO) and of the Canadian Law Teachers Association. She was a member of the Environmental Appeal Board, from 1988 to 2000

and a member of the Ontario Law Reform Commission from 1993 to 1996. She received the medal of the Law Society of Upper Canada in 1999 and the Order of Merit from the AJEFO in 2000.

Ms. Des Rosiers, with Louise Langevin is the author of *L'indemnisation des victimes de violence sexuelle et conjugale* (1998, Les Éditions Yvon Blais), and of numerous articles in constitutional law, administrative law and torts.

Ms. Des Rosiers obtained an LL.B. from the Université de Montréal in 1981 and an LL.M. from Harvard University in 1984. She became a member of the Barreau du Québec in 1982 and of the Law Society of Upper Canada in 1987.

Joan Dunn



Ontario Council Standing Committees

NEXT MEETING

Saturday, March 6th, 2004

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

Registration 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.
Meeting begins a 10:00 a.m.

Registration form enclosed

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Elizabeth Haynes, Chair



During the afternoon session we will be discussing EQAO testing and the OSSLT (literacy test). We will be looking at sample questions and answers from each of the tests and taking the opportunity to become familiar with the goals of the EQAO assessments. We will also be looking at how the OSSLT and OSSLC (Literacy course) are reflected on students' transcripts.

Lieutenant Governor James Barleman's book challenge has been a great success. Book donations from all over the province have been taken to OPP detachments and are now on their way to Northern communities. It's not too late for

your club to make a donation! OPP detachments will be accepting book donations until February 28. Still needed are new and gently used books for children and young adults. If you would like some help choosing books, the Greater Essex County District School Board has published a list of essential library books for elementary schools. You can access the list by going to the following web site:
<http://www.gecdsb.on.ca/sub/schools/elem/southwo/obook%20list-essential.pdf>

I look forward to seeing you March 6.

Beth



STATUS OF WOMEN COMMITTEE

Joan Dunn, Chair



All three committees will be together in the morning to hear Nathalie Des Rosiers, President of the Law Commission of Canada speak on topics relating to the status of women in Canada. In the afternoon, we will discuss advocacy strategies.

Joan



LEGISLATION COMMITTEE

Teri Shaw, Chair



The January meeting for Legislation featured Ann Mulvale, mayor of Oakville since 1988, and president of the Ontario Association of Municipalities, who spoke passionately of the dilemmas facing municipalities as a result of downloading of funding by the province. Municipalities have no say in the budgets set by the Provincial and Federal governments, and the new Municipal Act has no mechanism to assess

the cost to cities of changes made in provincial funding. Consequently a disproportionate burden of funding of services falls on municipal taxpayers (in Oakville 67% of revenues are property taxes, in most U.S. cities - 21%). In many cities infrastructure has been neglected in order to fund other services, with the result that they are literally falling apart. Further problems are caused by inter-union rivalries involving municipal employees (e.g. the police get a wage increase, therefore firemen have to get the same increase), and the fact that when some programs are funded equally among three levels of government, the city must pay GST and PST, but the others do not. She calls for the uploading of some services to the province, but more than that, a mindset that sees government services provided on a horizontal continuum, rather than a vertical hierarchy, with cities at the bottom, and a recognition that there is only one taxpayer. There must be dedicated, secure, predictable funding of all services in order to maintain our standard of living.

Peggy Pinkerton

At the next meeting to be held on March 6th, we will join with the other committees to hear Nathalie Des Rosiers, president of the Law Reform Commission. The Commission's report on Electoral Reform will be presented to Parliament in early March.

During the afternoon, a round-table discussion on various types of Club Action in your own community will take place. Some clubs who have had successes will present. Come with your thoughts, questions and suggestions, especially where Ontario Council might be able to help. This discussion will continue at the AGM in May.

Teri

FROM AROUND THE PROVINCE

Cambridge, Kitchener-Waterloo & Guelph's First December 6th Luncheon

The Cambridge, Guelph and Kitchener-Waterloo clubs were very pleased with the success of our first December 6th lunch. The lunch was held at the Whistle Bear Golf Club just west of Cambridge. This location provided easy access off Hwy. 401 for the 119 women participating in the lunch, as well as a very pretty and comfortable room.

Our speaker Priscilla deVilliers was a very moving speaker. She started out speaking about her daughter Nina and how she had recorded a song in memory of the 14 women killed at the Ecole Polytechnique in Montreal. Priscilla went on to talk about her daughter's disappearance and death. Priscilla and her family were very thankful for the support they received from many groups and organizations at that time. CAVEAT (an organization formed by Priscilla and her tennis friends) became the focus for them in their efforts to work against violence. Her talk was very moving and I do not think there was anyone who was not affected by it. I was very conscious of her point, that we should continue to work towards equality for women. That we and our daughters cannot hide in our homes where it is safe, that we have lives to live and we should live them to the fullest.

Another highlight of the lunch event was the mixing of CFUW club members from Orangeville, Milton, Georgetown, Cambridge, Guelph and Kitchener-Waterloo.

Debbie Cook



CBC Book Club comes to Kanata

The book club, broadcasted monthly, on CBC's *Ontario Today* visited CFUW/Kanata for a taping. *Crow Lake* by Mary Lawson was the book for discussion. The setting of the novel is northern Ontario about a family of four children, faced with tragedy. The story explores the relationships and ways in which the family overcomes the many challenges; how the caring community supports them and how personal ideals and successes are re-evaluated. Alan Neal was the host, accompanied by Professor David Staines and producer, Elizabeth Hay. Jill Jones, Anthea MacNeil, Pam Byrtus, Diana Pilsworth and Mary Williams offered their opinions and varied takes on the book. The hour's discussion was aired on Wednesday, November 26, 2003 between noon and one o'clock. The following hour was a phone-in, when listeners, including Mary Lawson's brother, offered their thoughts on the novel. Both hours of the program can be heard on the CBC Website by linking with Ontario Today's Book Club archives at www.ottawa.cbc.ca <<http://www.ottawa.cbc.ca>>

Marylea Burt

Dates & Data

Ann McElhinney - Editor
annmce@look.ca

Also available on the Ontario Council website
<http://www.wlu.ca/wwwlib/oncouncil/dates.htm>
1

Submissions Welcome
Please advise of any changes, additions or deletions to our mailing list

