

NEWSLETTER

NCWC NEWS PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

WARS AND ELECTIONS:

A year ago, the world was watching, or in some cases participating in, an exercise of modern warfare, which was to make the world a safer place in which to live. As I said then, "...no one can tell what the human costs will be..." It has been most disturbing to see the mindless effectiveness of so-called smart weapons. Women and children are all too often in the line of fire. These smart weapons are only as good as the minds behind their operation. There is no way they can avoid killing and maiming the innocent. We were all shocked and saddened last year when the reality of "friendly fire" was brought home to Canadians. Once again, advanced technology seems to have made human mistakes deadlier than ever.

The other disturbing fact is that we do not see the re-building of these damaged societies being assisted with the same apparent zeal as was evident when the advocates of the approaching war were presenting their case. There seems to be no limit to the amount of money that can be allocated to destruction. It is deplorable that the same free-spending approach is not used when repairing the worst of the physical damage of modern war.

The human wreckage of modern wars is all too often left rotting in refugee camps, or short-changed as they try to flee to safer countries as refugees. There is an apparent desire to make sure that re-building produces profits for some large corporations. This is dangerous. It could lead to seeing the act of war as a sort of high-tech demolition derby, clearing the ground for "reconstruction" by the destroyers to produce a profit for a miniscule number of all humanity, the shareholders of the participating companies. In all of this, what about vox populi, the voice of the people? Where is the patience to work for change without throwing a high-tech tantrum that punishes the innocent? Surely someone realizes the high cost to all humanity when the poor are made even poorer through the destruction of war.

National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC) did repeatedly urge our government to refrain from joining this war unless it was sanctioned by the United Nations, the ultimate representatives of the peoples of the sovereign states of the world. NCWC also went on to ask that Canada perform an active role in the reconstruction of the social infrastructure in Afghanistan, the scene of at least twenty-five years of modern warfare. Members were concerned that the lives of women and children were not being significantly improved for most Afghans.



Catharine Laidlaw-Sly

I think we all realize that this work will take a long time, and that it can only be achieved if we have the political will to see that our sisters' and their children's human rights are as important for the future of the world as our own rights.

These considerations lead naturally to discussion of how women's human rights are realized. There is a United Nations document, the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) with its Optional Protocol, the instrument that allows those who have exhausted the judicial means of seeking redress in their own country, to apply to the UN for redress and justice. However, this is a general document and certainly not country specific, and the processes of the Optional Protocol can be

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difficult and slow to use. There is a new call to address the issues here with a Canadian Women's Charter. Development of such a document should be useful for those in our country whose voice is not always heard: the poor, the disabled, the visible minorities, Aboriginal women and the over-worked women doing the unpaid, uncounted work on which the GDP rests. This seems to be an idea whose time has come, to help move the process of change forward.

Other than war, there is the slow degradation and destruction caused by chronic poverty, and that is a growing problem in our country. We know that the income gap between the rich and the poor is growing. That should be the focus of the next election. In a way it will, but likely the issues will be framed without much consideration for ordinary people. Budgets have to be balanced; there is only so much money; I think we have already heard most of the justifications used for the present political climate of thought.

The other consideration is the importance of how the electoral process works. As we approach the next federal election, we hear once again the promises of all political parties that they "really, really want" competent women candidates to offer themselves for nomination. However, this repeated promise rings hollow. None of the parties has substantially changed their internal infrastructure to ensure a level playing field for female candidates for nomination.

Some parties are doing more than others about this and have the elected numbers to prove it, but right now Canadian women are being treated to a great deal of very sexist behaviour in various constituency nomination fights as well as equally sexist coverage of the leadership race in one particular party. It would seem that some sort of testosterone-infused mental processes lead to huge emphasis on hair colour, general appearance, vocal pitch and speaking style when a woman is campaigning. I would not advocate seeing an equally demeaning and patronising approach to male candidates; but what is really disturbing is that these guys just don't get it. The marvel is that women still vote and are not turned off the electoral process by this evidence that whatever happens, the male-directed and male-oriented political system is one tough nut to crack. It certainly proves that evolution can seem to be non-existent.

What does one do? It is still not too late to join the party of your choice and help select the best candidate from many, including capable women we hope. And now, before the election is called, women must make sure that some of the issues that repeated polling reveals as "women's priorities" are front and centre. Only then will the political parties feel compelled to incorporate these concerns in their platforms. Health care, safe affordable housing, high-quality child care, education and a clean environment are some of our key issues.

Women also wonder how it is that there are politicians who have forgotten that in the Great Depression, Canadian governments repeatedly punished the poor, the unemployed and the homeless without any benefit to the economy as they insisted on "balancing the budget". Once again, we hear some of our elected leaders saying that the poor have only themselves to blame, that they have to be kicked off welfare because they are just free-loaders and so on. Of course there are some who cheat. But that failing is not confined to the ranks of the poor. Government scandals are created by breaking the rules which is cheating of one kind or another, and the financial news has seen a long litany of the extremely profitable cheating that has been carried out by the leaders of some now-bankrupt companies. These captains of industry have in many cases reduced thousands of employees to abject poverty in the process. Are those newly poor really responsible for their situation? Where should that buck stop?

Sadly, it would appear that once again, after the election, Canadian women will not be represented in the House of Commons by enough women to make a difference in how questions about national priorities are decided. We shall continue to try and catch the ear of government realizing that we are a silenced majority of the population.

To take one issue, maintenance of a state of good health is now rightly seen as a requisite to cutting the soaring costs of medical care. That starts with good health before birth, relies on eating properly throughout life, with proper shelter, clean water with effective sewage treatment, clean air to breathe, and the opportunity to live and work in a meaningful and reasonably fulfilling way throughout life. Poverty causes people to eat poorly, live in poor housing, avoid medical checkups, miss educational opportunities, and feel defeated by life's challenges. These all cost money, something the really poor never have enough of. In the days of the Great Depression, the poor wound up in hospital, usually to die if they could not be saved, at great cost to the medical system. In those days it was women who struggled to overcome illness in the family. Today, it is still usually women who care for the ill released early from hospitals, or released from institutions. This was and is unpaid work, the value of which is never shown in the GDP. Is that where Canadian politicians are leading us? Back to the future? Is it possible that they have not read history or remembered the lessons learnt less than 100 years ago? Surely, it is not beyond the capacity of our political parties' deep thinkers to do some gender analysis and find better ways to use the entrusted tax dollars we provide. They could start by listening to and acting on women's priorities and recommendations.

Therefore it is my hope that women will band together this election and insist that empty and vague promises are not enough to win their vote. Work inside the party of your choice and if that is not possible, make sure that the candidates, and above all the leaders of the parties cannot escape their responsibility to address the needs of the majority of the population. It is beyond high time.

Women and the Press

By *Elizabeth Fleming*

Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba was pleased to have Catherine Mitchell speak and take questions on "Women and the Press" at its January general meeting.

Ms. Mitchell is currently the only woman on the Editorial Board of the Winnipeg Free Press, Manitoba's largest circulation daily newspaper. Ms. Mitchell has written powerful columns on the situation of aboriginal women, for example, "When band government goes bad" (13 June 2002) and "Women's rights? Maybe later" (5 December 2003)".

Ms. Mitchell grew up in north-eastern Ontario. She studied journalism at Carleton University and began her career with the Winnipeg Free Press in 1984. As a reporter she covered general news, the law courts and the Manitoba Legislature. Her duties as an editorial board member include writing daily editorials, a column once a week, and participating in board decisions. She was formerly the letters editor and now substitutes for the editor of the "View from the West" pages, a twice-weekly selection of opinion and editorial articles by writers in Western Canada.

Considering PCWM's brochure and what she knows of our work on a number of issues, Ms Mitchell encouraged PCWM to be more strategic about making our voices heard. It is an advantage that PCWM is non-partisan and takes a wider, longer term, public interest approach. Reporters live in a pressure cooker of deadlines. They are always seeking tips and sound sources of information. If a reporter has made an error, left something out, it is fine to call up and discuss the matter. The media need feedback. A rapport with a journalist can develop. Reporters recognize and value knowledgeable sources;

From Your Editor

By *Jeanne Maranda*

Hello to all members of Councils.

Your excellent collaboration for this issue of the newsletter has made me very happy! Your response with reports and excerpts of your activities made fascinating reading. I hope you will continue to submit your articles and I do wish to hear from the "silent ones" sometime soon. Sharing your interests for the benefit of all is the very root of understanding and enrichment. Please send us your comments on the format and content of the newsletter. How can we improve this publication? What would you like to see in the newsletter? Many thanks and félicitations!

sources which have depth, accuracy, history and context. There is also a snowball effect. Once an organization like PCWM becomes a recognized and trusted source for a few issues, reporters start to call.

The Free Press welcomes op-ed pieces from the public. One can always try writing freelance. Letters to the editor are another route to public opinion.

Ms. Mitchell has an on-going battle over putting "cleavage" on the paper's front page. Readers who object to cleavage can make a difference by calling in and speaking out.

At our meeting, PCWM president, Arlene Draffin Jones, mentioned the topic of female genital mutilation. Ms. Mitchell called her back. An excellent column on FGM by Catherine Mitchell appeared in the January 22 Free Press. A group putting on a conference in Winnipeg on FGM in early February received some welcome publicity and later coverage for a difficult subject – proof that women working with the press can have a positive effect.

NCWC Annual Brief to Government

By *Catharine Laidlaw-Sly*

National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC) submitted its 2003 Annual Brief to the Government last fall (November 3, 2003) as well as to many other Members of Parliament, including the Leaders of all the Parties. (NCWC is a non-partisan organization and seeks dialogue with all Political Parties). After the new Government was sworn in on December 12, NCWC wrote congratulating the Members of the Cabinet and re-submitted the 2003 Annual Brief with specific policies directed to the relevant ministers. NCWC also forwarded a copy of the Pre-Budget Brief to the Hon. Ralph Goodale in January when the Minister was conducting consultations across Canada as he prepared this year's Budget.

There has been an encouraging response from Ministers (or their offices) which can be taken as re-assurance that the government does intend to realise greater consultation as an on-going exercise in democratic dialogue.

A list of respondents is available on the NCWC Web Site.

It is my expectation as President that Council members will be pleased to learn that the hard work they do every year developing policy recommendations to forward to the Government and MPs are actually being received and acknowledged. This is the first part of a meaningful democratic dialogue, and you as citizens are doing your democratic duty.

Saskatoon Council of Women

By Alma Wagner Roberts

Saskatoon Women's Hall of Fame

The Saskatoon Women's Hall of Fame honours outstanding women who have contributed in significant ways to the betterment of our community and wider society. The Hall of Fame was established in 1996 by the Saskatoon Council of Women to celebrate the 80th Anniversary of its founding. The inaugural event was held in conjunction with the Annual Meeting of the National Council of Women of Canada, held in Saskatoon in May of that year.

On October 21, 2003, the Saskatoon Council of Women inducted four more women into the Hall of Fame, at the annual Persons Day Luncheon, bringing the total to eighteen inductees since 1996. Ruth Horlick has spent a lifetime of achievements in the field of psychiatric rehabilitation. Flo Lavallie is a pioneer in the establishment of Tamara's House, a home for sexually abused women and girls. Her practice promotes the use of complementary/alternative medicine. Lusia Pavlychenko produced a world renowned dance performance, specifically the Pavlychenko Folklorique Ensemble. Judge Tillie Taylor's sensitive approach to legal issues has made major contributions in the field of Human Rights.

Association of Saskatchewan Home Economists (ASHE)

The Saskatchewan Branch is currently involved in two major projects: The Emmie Oddie Website (homefamily.net) provides factual, well-researched information on home economics topics for household managers, consumers, teachers, students and home economists. This site was made possible by donations to the Emmie Oddie Recognition Fund, Canadian Home Economics Association Foundation, established to acknowledge the contributions to Emmie Oddie who used her home economics background for almost fifty years to answer questions from readers of the Western Producer, a respected prairie newspaper.

Living Simply: A Handbook for Newly Single Adults was initiated by the Association of Saskatchewan Home Economists, Saskatoon Branch, in response to a need to develop a resource that would provide basic living skills information for older adults, especially those assuming household responsibilities formerly done by a partner.

Together with Saskatoon District Health and the Council of Aging, ASHE - Saskatoon Branch developed a vision and action plan to provide supports for those newly assuming responsibility for all household tasks. The result was Living Simply. A facilitators' handbook is available for use by professionals when presenting workshops. Copies of the handbook are available from the Saskatoon Council of Aging, #301-506 25th Street, East, Saskatoon, Sask. S7K 4A7. Tel (306) 652-2255.

Montreal Council of Women

By Bonnie Lee Smith

Montreal Council of Women's Executive Vice-Presidents, Bonnie Lee Smith and Jeanne Maranda met with two representatives of the Montreal Direction for Social Development and submitted to them a series of questions in relation with Homelessness, the theme chosen by the federated societies following a survey last December. Here are the questions produced by Bonnie Lee Smith:

- 1- What activities, programs are currently in place?
- 2- Do the activities, programs, services target populations such as youth, women, people with mental illness? If so, in what ways are the programs, activities working?
- 3- Do you work with community groups, universities, clinics on developing/ providing services or programs?
- 4- What is the biggest strength of the dossier?
- 5- What is the biggest problem?
- 6- What plans, hopes are being developed for the future?
- 7- Is there a designated budget for the dossier? If so, has it changed in the past two years? Will it change next year?
- 8- How do you suggest Montreal Council of Women could support, promote work on homelessness dossier?

Our questions met with comprehensive data and precisions that we will communicate to our members . The representatives were most anxious to work with us and welcomed our co-operation.

Hamilton & District Council of Women

By *Thelma McGillivray*

HDCW held two events with the purpose of gaining visibility and public awareness of the significant work, past and current, of Council of Women and to increase membership. One, October 4, 2003, a workshop on how to get your voice heard through writing resolutions, was well attended and ably facilitated by members, Margaret MacGee, Mary Potter and Gracia Janes. This resulted in a PCWO resolution from St. Catharines for 2004. The second event, on November

10, 2003, was a celebration of HDCW's 110th Anniversary. Invitees represented numerous organizations who shared their mission and activities, a memorial for past members, and an inspiring speech by NCWC president, Catharine Laidlaw-Sly.

In January, 2004, we joined other organizations to view a video produced by the Older Women's Network on the economic and employment status of mid-life and older women. A steering committee is considering a forum on this theme utilising both the Securing Our Future and OWN projects with partners from the community. We have a Resolutions meeting planned also to include non-members.

CRISIS IN SCHOOL LIBRARIES

By *Jeanne Maranda*

Most of us parents are probably not aware of the dire state of Canadian school libraries. The Association of Canadian Publishers in accord with the Canadian Coalition for School Libraries, a volunteer group of parents, writers, librarians and publishers formed in March 2002, considering the emergency of the situation, decided to raise public awareness in order to urge the governments to act before it is too late. Roch Carrier, Canada's National Librarian, declared recently: "If nothing is done, Canada will pay a steep price down the road."

Dr Ken Haycock, professor and former Director of the Graduate School of Library, Archival and Information Studies at the University of British Columbia was invited to survey the public school libraries and present a report to the National School Library Summit held in Ottawa, June 2003. The comprehensive survey entitled: "The Crisis in Canadian School Libraries: the Case for Reform and Reinvestment" gives an appalling diagnosis of the steady decline of quality in school libraries across the country. Dr Haycock surveyed research dating back 40 years to demonstrate the link between library services and academic performances with many examples of erosion of support for Canadian school libraries. Some statistics taken from the survey: in Ontario, 40% of the Elementary schools had a full-time teacher-librarian 25 years ago; now, it is down to 10%. In Alberta, 550 teacher-librarians worked half-time or more; to-day there are 106, and in Nova Scotia, in 1990 there were 103 teacher-librarians; to-day, there are 9!

Dr Haycock researched 40 years of American reports to prove the correlation between a well-staffed library and the academic achievements of the students. He visited schools in more than a dozen American States

and discovered without a doubt that students scored higher on tests in schools with a higher book-count per pupil, where libraries were open longer and where there was a full-time teacher-librarian.

"Given the concern about education to-day " Dr Haycock says, "it seems surprising that an existing resource like the library should be so undernourished and undervalued".

Here are the 13 recommendations to reform library policies put forward by the survey:

- larger library collections for students, including books, periodical subscriptions and electronic subscriptions, means higher achievement;
- increased spending on library books and other materials correlates with improved reading scores;
- test scores rise when students have greater access to teacher-librarians;
- school library programs have been shown to improve boys' reading skills;
- school library programs and staffing levels are linked to students' success in post-secondary education;
- high-achieving schools tend to assign a greater priority to school library funding from the other program choices available to them.

The report is available on-line
www.peopleforeducation.com/librarycoalition/Report03.pdf

Provincial Council of Women of Quebec

By Elizabeth Hutchinson

Semi-Annual Meeting : 25 October 2003 Focuses on Water

André Boutellier, President of Eau Secours (a Quebec coalition for responsible management of water) gave an overview of the situation in Quebec regarding water - the work of Eau Secours in this regard. We then had an engaging discussion as to whether PCWQ would pursue action in relation to water and, if so, what would we do.

We decided on the following:

- we would lobby the government to implement a water policy which would be enforceable
- we would educate, first ourselves (via the newsletter) and then perhaps others, regarding simple, practical things each of us could do to use water better.

"Water, Water Everywhere, Nor Any Drop Fit to Drink"

Sadly this has come to haunt Canadians, - we who have the largest wetland area in the world. How can this be? Canadians are among the biggest water users in the world. Nearly all our economic and social activities depend on water. So how we manage our water supply is of paramount importance.

SOME DISTURBING FACTS:

- Half of Quebec's drinking water comes from the St. Lawrence River which is also used by hundreds of ships transporting chemicals and oil. What happens if there is a spill??
- One litre of oil can contaminate up to 2 million litres of water.
- World-wide water withdrawals from water bodies have risen from 250 cubic meters/person/year in 1900 to over 700 cubic meters today.
- Many homes lose more water from leaky taps than they use for cooking and drinking.
- Less than 3% of the water produced at a large municipal water treatment plant is used for drinking purposes.

- Residential indoor water use in Canada: toilet, 30%; bathing and showering, 35%; laundry, 20%; kitchen and drinking, 10%; cleaning, 5%

TEST YOURSELF (answers on page 8)

1. A 5-minute shower with a standard shower head uses (100? 200? 50?) litres of water.
2. A 5-minute shower with a low -flow shower head uses only (40? 50? 35?) litres of water.
3. During the summer, about (2/3? 1/2? 1/4?) of all treated water is sprayed onto lawns and gardens.
4. On average, (10%? 14%? 25%?) of municipal piped water is lost in pipeline leaks.
5. Water consumption usually drops (10-15%? 18-25%? 15-20%?) after a water meter is installed.

Introducing Sharia Law in Canada

By Catharine Laidlaw-Sly

There is an organized attempt underway to introduce the use of Sharia Law in Canada. NCWC is very concerned about this news.

The first response should be that Canada cannot permit the introduction of Sharia Law, as it is practised, since to do so, would immediately contravene Canada's signed and ratified assent to the United Nations Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

Alia Hogben, President of the Canadian Council of Muslim Women (a federate of NCWC), quite clearly voiced opposition. There were also male Muslim speakers who spoke out in opposition.

This could be a threat to Muslim women's Human Rights in Family Court proceedings where hidden pressure within families may be exerted to ensure agreement to use this proposed alternative system.

Since this development is centred in Ontario, taking advantage of some legislation permitting alternative bodies to handle arbitration hearings, with the proviso that the arbitrated agreement would have to be approved in Court, it is my belief that NCWC will have to enlist the expertise of our Muslim members as well as federates with legal expertise such as the National Association of Women and the Law to prevent this from happening.

Women need to speak out and stand together on this issue. Write to your MP, and your MLA today. This is not acceptable. Canada must uphold CEDAW. It is a treaty commitment .

Visitor's Forum

Canadian Medical Association

Carole Lavigne, Manager, Media Relations

Two-thirds of Canadians waited too long for access to health care services over the past year. Almost half of those said that they or a family member had seen their condition worsen or their stress and anxiety increase as a result, according to research conducted by Ipsos-Reid on behalf of the Canadian Medical Association (CMA).

"Canadians are telling us that waiting for health care is making them sick and tired," said Dr. Sunil Patel, President of the CMA. "As a physician, I too am tired - tired of constantly defending the system to patients asking me why - 'why must I wait so long for my referral, my tests or my treatment?'"

With most Canadians indicating they feel waiting times are only getting worse, the CMA is launching a national campaign aimed at improving access to health care services for Canadians. As a first step, the CMA is calling on the federal government to take immediate action in its upcoming budget to address the number one barrier to accessing health care services as identified by three-quarters of Canadians, the growing shortage of health care providers.

The CMA is calling for the creation of a five year \$1 billion dollar Health Human Resources Reinvestment Fund. Such a fund, coupled with the creation of a Health Institute for Human Resources, will allow for national, long-term sustainable health human resource planning to put more hands on deck, not just physicians but also others such as nurses and technicians. These initiatives will also help address critical needs such as the current lack of medical residency positions.

To address health infrastructure concerns, such as improving hospital facilities and the ability to upgrade medical devices, the CMA is also calling on the federal government to stop clawing back health care funding by fully rebating or reducing to zero the GST paid by the health care system. This initiative will provide at least some relief from the ongoing cost pressures and is in keeping with the spirit of recent federal announcements regarding the GST and municipalities.

CMA will release a five-country comparative study on waiting times. In late March CMA will co-sponsor a meeting of national and international experts to share research and identify the policy implications of improved measurement, monitoring and management of waiting times.

The Famous Five: Nation Builders

Recipient of the 2003 Governor General's Awards in Commemoration of the Persons Case - Babs Friesen

By Mary Scott

Babs Friesen is a friend, teacher, mentor and worker, who has helped guide many to their current positions. She demonstrates how it is possible for an individual to make a difference in her community.

Babs leads by example and in spite of her age and health issues she is active at both meetings and events within her community. She believes in the value of women's work and fights for its recognition in a positive fashion. She keeps herself informed about current trends and technology. She draws on her vast experience and innovation to solve problems.

Babs is active with her Church, MATCH, The Winnipeg and Manitoba Councils of Women, Immigrant Women, UN Platform for Action Committee (MB) and the YM-YWCA. She also has advocated strongly on women's health.

Babs puts the welfare of others before her own. Her influence in the community is felt by a wide range of people of diverse backgrounds.

Read All About It !!

www.mediawatch.ca

MediaWatch is a national, not for profit feminist organization working to eliminate sexism in the media. They seek to transform the media environment from one in which women are either invisible or stereotyped, to one in which women are realistically portrayed and equitably represented in all our physical, economic, racial and cultural diversity.

These changes are fundamental to altering the current social climate in which gender inequality and violence against women are pervasive. They promote change by educating media industries, government and the public, conducting research, and encouraging consumer advocacy.

Over the years, MediaWatch has produced many educational print and video resources related to the media's portrayal of women and girls. They also offer a range of interactive, media literacy workshops suitable for schools and community groups.

THEY WANT THE MEDIA TO:

Portray Women Positively

Depict Diversity

Depict Women as Experts

Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies (CAEFS)

Minister McLellan Must Remedy Human Rights Violations

Changes Could Mean Fewer Women in Canadian Prisons

Kim Pate, Executive Director

Equality rights groups are urging Public Safety Minister Anne McLellan to immediately implement the recommendations released today by the Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC). The special report on systemic human rights violations experienced by women serving sentences of two years or more in Canada is a response to a complaint filed by the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies (CAEFS) and the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) in 2001.

"The number of times that the Commission calls for reviews, audits and external accountability shows they understand the urgent need to address the human rights violations experienced by women prisoners," stated Dr. Ailsa M. Watkinson, President of CAEFS, which called for the review. "We commend the Commission and we are especially pleased that they recognize the fundamental flaws in the classification system. It results in the unnecessary labeling of so many women as maximum security with 'the harsh treatment this entails'. We welcome the Commission's call for Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) to design a classification system and corresponding programs that accommodate women's needs, rather than continuing to treat women like men 'based on stereotypes and perceptions'," continued Dr. Watkinson.

As part of the process of developing submissions to the Canadian Human Rights Commission, CAEFS consulted with approximately 30 national and international women's, Aboriginal, disability and social justice groups.

Throughout the report, the Commission points to the tragic consequences that result from the defective manner in which women are initially assessed. Aboriginal women and women with mental disabilities are especially over-classified, often kept in segregated, isolated living conditions. "Fewer women classified as maximum security prisoners will mean more women can be reintegrated into the community in a much

shorter time," says Kim Pate, Executive Director of the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies. "We hope that Minister McLellan will act immediately to introduce a new classification system and the decarceration strategies that this will necessitate."

CAEFS strongly supports the Commission's proposal for independent monitoring and accountability mechanisms. The call for judicial oversight reiterates the recommendations of Madam Justice Louise Arbour. In 1996, Arbour reported on the failure of the CSC to follow the law and its own policies in dealing with women prisoners. "We are hopeful that Minister McLellan will recognize the vital need for such a body to monitor CSC's adherence to principles of justice, fairness and the rule of law."

"The Commission's report clearly identifies the discrimination experienced by women prisoners. CAEFS welcomes the opportunity to work with CSC, as well as the Ministers of Public Safety and Justice, to help implement recommendations that are vital to improving the lives of some of Canada's most vulnerable women," concluded Pate.

Women's Missionary Society of the Presbyterian Church of Canada

Excerpt from "Glad Tidings" Jan/Feb. issue

July 25, 2003 was a day of celebration at Jobat Christian Hospital in a small town in Rajasthan, India. The occasion was the retirement of Marjorie Ross after eleven years as secretary. She was presented with a cheque for \$2000 toward the acquisition of an incubator for premature babies, a dire need for the Jobat Hospital which is more than an hour's journey by ambulance to the nearest hospital possessing an incubator. Ms Marjorie in her speech mentioned: "This gift has a special significance for me. Three of my grandchildren spent their first days in an incubator. I am thankful that this incubator will provide the same gift of life to Jobat babies as my grandchildren in Canada". Dr Tezlo, the head nurse, the midwife and the whole staff were clearly delighted that they now have this wonderful piece of equipment, thanks to the thoughtfulness of the WMS.

Answers : #1-100 litres, #2-35 litres, #3-1/2, #4-1/4%, #5-18-25%

SPOTLIGHT ON:

Victoria Council of Women

The Victoria Council of Women of Canada was founded in 1894 to facilitate communication among women and women's organizations on issues important to the community. While these issues focused primarily on the health and welfare of women and children they also included a wide range of other matters dealing with the environment, education and government. The Council – sometimes referred to as a "parliament of women", provides a forum for discussion and action. Resolutions passed at the local level are forwarded to provincial and national councils for presentation to government.

History:

The main impetus for the formation of the Victoria Council was to get women elected to local school boards. Mrs. Louise Baker, wife of the provincial minister of education, was acclaimed as first president at a public meeting presided over by Lady Ishbel Aberdeen, national president and wife of the Governor-General of Canada. In January 1895, the Council petitioned the government for "female representation on school boards". Within a few weeks the School Act was amended and a special election held to fill a vacant seat. The Council's candidate, Mrs. Maria Grant, was elected and became British Columbia's first female school trustee.



The Victoria Council of Women also has the unique distinction of being the first Council in Canada to endorse women's suffrage, which they did in 1908. Women's suffrage was granted in B.C. in 1917. In 1987, the Victoria Council of Women presented a plaque to the provincial legislature honouring two members who had worked for over 30 years for women's suffrage. They were Maria Grant and Cecilia Spofford.

Other highlights in history: the Council formed the "Friendly Help Society", a charitable organization, later taken over by the City of Victoria during the Great Depression of the 1930's.

Local Council of Women of Halifax



Since its founding in 1894 the Local Council of Women of Halifax has been instrumental in many community developments. The Council has served as a focal point over the years for groups striving for better conditions in the community, and through the National Council of Women of Canada, for improvements in the country at large. Other women's groups today have taken over much of what Local Councils pioneered. In Halifax it still maintains a presence, meeting at the Council House donated by philanthropist and developer George Wright in 1913. The Council House has recently been declared a Heritage Property. The Halifax Council have also prepared and presented a brief in response to proposed changes to the Environment Act, Nova Scotia legislation on May 2nd, 2000; submitted a resolution for consideration to NCWC at the AGM in June 2001 on Quality End of Life Care, in support of the work by the Senate Committee Chair, Senator Sharon Carstairs.



NCWCDO

By Carol Schweitzer

Do you have suggestions for projects that NCWCDO can consider for financial support? Are you and/or your Council wanting to donate money to NCWCDO? I hope that you noticed the NCWCDO article in the Fall issue of the NCWC Newsletter. It outlined the parameters that are used to determine whether a project is eligible for consideration by NCWCDO for support. Because the newsletter goes up on the website, personal addresses could not be included in the article.

The deadline for this year has passed but suggestions for next year are welcome.

In April, we shall know the amount available to be distributed this year. Summaries of eligible projects will be circulated so that all members can choose the way they wish the funds to be divided.

Donations received and deposited by March 31 will be included in the funds to be distributed to the organizations chosen this year.

We have heard from both organizations that NCWCDO supported last year and reports will be brought to the Annual Meeting in Edmonton. As well, NCWCDO has received donations and suggestions for projects. Keep them coming!

AN INSPIRATION!

from "Conservatory Notes Canada" volume 13, number 1 September 2003.

Mary Pankiw, President of the Council of Women of Winnipeg, was recently highlighted by Conservatory Canada. Mary was the first Canadian-born woman to earn a PhD at the Ukrainian Free University in Munich, Germany in 1978. She has been profiled in Chatelaine's 1998 and 1999 editions of "Who's Who of Canadian Women". At the age of 80, Dr. Pankiw has just completed the first half of the Associate Teacher's Examination in Voice with an honours mark. Widowed at 46 with 5 children, Mary continued her education and received a Bachelor of Education Degree in May 1969. Continuing Education has been paramount to her successes. The next time someone says that they are too old or too busy to learn, Dr. Pankiw's story may offer a different perspective. Congratulations !!

Pauline Johnson

By Andrew Sly

E. Pauline Johnson (1861-1913) was a writer, a poet, a gripping performer, a patriotic Canadian, a proud half-Mohawk, a canoeing enthusiast, and a bohemian spirit. The texts of her few published books are now freely available online and a project is underway to also transcribe and preserve uncollected stories and articles written by this fascinating woman.

The book "Paddling Her Own Canoe" (Veronica Strong-Boag and Carole Gerson, 2000) contains an extensive list of material written by Pauline Johnson published in various newspapers and magazines, from across Canada, the U.S. and London, England. This has been very helpful, although, sadly, some items appear impossible to find, and are probably only known by being referred to from secondary sources.

There is unexpected variety to explore in the twenty-nine items so far assembled for this collection. Johnson wrote touching stories, informative articles, light-hearted sketches, travel journalism, and one mystery. Topics range from Iroquois history and culture to rowing competitions to praise of the natural beauty of many different parts of Canada.

Here are brief descriptions of selected items. "The Legend of the Seven White Swans" is a beautiful re-telling of a Squamish legend about a woman with a crippled foot, in the same style as Johnson's popular "Legends of Vancouver." In "Striking Camp" Johnson describes with humour the regret of the end of summer camp and the good and bad points of being treated as a "lady canoeist". The informative article "The Iroquois Women of Canada" presents an alternative view to prevailing stereotypes of the day. It may be of interest to note this was taken from "Women of Canada: their Life and Work" published by the NCWC for the Paris Exhibition in 1900.

Digital transcriptions of these stories and articles are being released as public domain material, free of copyright restrictions. Anyone interested in seeing what's been done so far can take a look at <http://www.victoria.tc.ca/~sly/epj/index.htm>



Thoughts For The Day

We'll never know the worth of water
'till the well goes dry. -
Scottish Proverb

"Water, water everywhere, but not a drop to drink!"

By Gracia Janes, NCWC Environment Convener

This old saying could be used by some as a doomsday prophesy, given the obvious perception of many that we have lots of water on the surface of the earth, especially in Canada, versus the equally valid reality that even Canada risks using, polluting, and exporting too much of its precious water. As cautioned by Francois Souldard, a researcher at Statistics Canada, in a December 4th 2003 Globe and Mail article, the country has a false sense of security, "There is a possibility of running out of fresh water,...There are always potential issues with water."

This stark warning is very clearly supported by background material to the NCWC 2001 Update on Water and Multilateral Trade Agreements, which said :

"With 7% of the world's land mass, Canada has 9% of its renewable water. However 60% of this water drains north, away from the 90% of the population living within 300 kms of our southern neighbour. Canada's water is already threatened by varying types of pollution such as: acid rain, parasites and bacteria that are not eliminated by chlorine, agricultural runoff, and poor treatment facilities and practices. With good stewardship, Canada's water is recyclable, not renewable. Simply put, Canada is not a water-rich country."

Given developments since that update, it is timely that we renew our commitment to protecting and preserving Canada's water.

All across Canada one can find results of grave inadequacies in the way we protect and conserve water on a macro scale - water is vital to all of us in order to survive and to our natural world - its species and eco systems.

Some startling examples include:

- Walkerton's water supply contamination
- Chemical spills into the St. Clair River, from which cities like Sarnia draw their water
- Massive hydro electric project dams planned for Newfoundland and Quebec, that threaten vast acreages of wilderness, including over 1,000 kilometres of old growth boreal forest
- Oil explorations and development in Alberta, that assaults that province's boreal forest
- The plans being investigated by the US Corps of Army Engineers for the widening of the St. Lawrence Seaway

- Little control over water extraction - for sale as bottled water, or for a multitude of uses in several provinces, e.g. in 2003, the Swiss multinational OMYA received a permit to increase its water extraction from the Tay River near Ottawa (for its mining operation) from 1,483 to 4,500 cubic meters daily, and then fortunately, with a change in government, had that permission cancelled
- Threats of water diversions and bulk exports abroad. e.g. Newfoundland

NCWC has strong policies that allows its members to lobby their respective decision makers about such problems with the use and abuse of water.

For example NCWC Policy 2001.3PU urged the federal government to:

1. "Protect the long term supply of water for domestic, agricultural, commercial, industrial uses
2. prohibit the export of bulk water by pipeline, tanker, bulk carrier, or by inter-basin transfer
3. assert sovereignty over Canadian water resources, and ensure that multilateral trade agreements guarantee compliance with Canadian ownership and control over the delivery of vital natural resources such as water and
4. work with the provinces to ensure the prohibition of water exports, in order to avoid repercussions under NAFTA or any other trade agreement...."

This policy also urged its federates to urge the provincial governments to:

continued on page 12

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed by contributors are their own and do not necessarily reflect or represent the views of the National Council of Women of Canada, its members or federates.

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"Water, water everywhere..." continued from page 11

1. "sign and abide by the Accord for the Prohibition of Bulk Water Removal from Drainage Basins and
2. prohibit the export of bulk Water, surface or groundwater, from any source, by any means whatsoever."

The thoughtless overuse and abuse of water was summed up in a recent Globe and Mail article, which stated that the only people that use more water per capita than Canadians are Americans. It went on to say that the reason is that we are "amongst the world's most profligate users of water because the price of water is so cheap and thatCanadians pay more for beer or coffee than we pay for 1,000 litres of treated drinking water (generally less than \$1 per litre.)..." "Those of us who have water meters and pay for each unit of water, use an average of 269 litres of water per day, while those who simply pay a flat rate, regardless of what they use, consume 457 litres daily - 70% more!"

In the same article some local actions were noted. For instance "Cochrane, Alberta deferred a multimillion dollar pipeline to import water by giving away toilet dams, low flow showerheads and faucet aerators. Port Elgin, Ontario avoided \$5.5 million dollar expansion of its water treatment plant by spending \$550,000, on installing residential water meters and an intensive conservation program. It is estimated that if Winnipeggers cut per capita water use by 5% per day, the city could defer construction of new facilities costing \$350 million, for 13 years."

As we have learned, there are lots of personal remedies, some very important government actions at the provincial and local levels, and some very

ITEM	COST	QUANTITY	AMOUNT
Subscription	\$15.00		
Yearbook	\$25.00		
A Splendid Vision	\$35.00		
*Donation	Amount		
Total:			

*Donations to the NCWC are not tax deductible at this time.

Comments and Suggestions:

Address:

important federal actions that must be taken. I encourage you to think about:

What you can do personally, for instance sign on to the David Suzuki 10 point pledge by logging on to www.davidsuzuki.org

What kind of letters you can write to your respective Provincial or Federal government representatives, using the NCWC and PCW policies.

Here are some contacts you can make.

- Sierra Legal Defence Fund - National Alert - Major threats to your water at www.sierralegal.org
- The Council of Canadians - 151 Slater Street, Suite 502, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5H3 (613) 233 - 2773
- Great Lakes United at www.glu.org

Available on request from Gracia Janes is an excellent position paper written by Dr. John Bacher "Reasonable and Urgently Needed Steps to Protect Water in Canada"

Looking to the Future



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