

# NEWSLETTER

## NCWC NEWS PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### Nulli secunda — Second to none

In view of the fact that October is Women's History Month, and also because the past year might be described as an *annus horribilis* for enlightened women in this country, I think *we need to remember how far we have come and the major accomplishments we have achieved in the last 40 years.*

This was especially brought home to me the other day when I came across a magazine which caught my attention. It stated: "*105 potential women MP's, How to get women elected, and Why we need more women at Ottawa.*" The magazine was *Chatelaine* and the date was *October 1971*. In a very hard-hitting editorial that pulled no punches, Doris Anderson talked about the 105 reasons why women should be in Parliament. [*Although the same title could very well be found in a current publication, in 1971 only one woman had a seat in the House of Commons.*]

This is part of Doris Anderson's editorial:

*"Politicians have always been both for and against women getting the vote for the wrong reasons. They were against it because they felt women would be too radical. (In actual fact they are more conservative than men.) They were for women getting the vote because they felt our "goodness," our sweet and temperate natures would come down on the side of peace, virtue and justice. This hasn't proved particularly true either. But, with women moving into all walks of life at a faster clip than ever before, surely it's a matter of democratic principle that there should be more women at Ottawa. ....The easiest and most effective way to squelch women on the political scene is not to take them seriously. Pat them on the head. Tell them before elections how important they are rocking the cradle — and not rocking the political boat — and forget about them."*

In 1971 Grace MacInnis, NDP, Vancouver-Kingsway, was the only woman with a seat in Parliament. Between 1920 and 1971, only 17 other women had been elected to Parliament; women never held more than 5% of the seats at any one time during those years. Women were more often than not asked to run in lost-cause ridings, if they were asked at all. It was also common practice to get a widow to run in her husband's riding after his death. However, after 1972 more and more women began to put their names forth; maybe *Chatelaine's* article in 1971 had more than a little to do with that. After the election in 1984, women made up 10% of the House of Commons.

Looking back at the 60s and 70s, and 80s, we need to acknowledge to each other that we have made a difference. The Doris Andersons, the Laura Sabias, the Thérèse Casgrains and the organizations such as the National Council of Women of Canada have advanced the cause of



Karen Dempsey

gender equality for women and have significantly improved the life of women in this country. If you remember what it was like, you know how far we have come. In case you weren't there, here is a brief look back.

It was in the 1960's that what has been called the "second wave" of the women's movement occurred in Canada. More and more women were willing to call themselves feminists. The movement itself was usually called the Women's Liberation Movement, and its members often derogatorily referred to as "women's libbers." It was a time of marches in the streets and bra-burning which got a lot of attention naturally. In the U.S., Gloria Steinem, who later founded *Ms.* magazine, went undercover as a Playboy bunny to write an exposé on that sexist world.

Ester Serrano in "Barefoot and Pregnant," *Notes on Women's Liberation, Detroit, Michigan* stated: "*In my high school they had three curriculums: occupational, business, and college prep. The occupational curriculum had drafting, and*

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several skilled trades courses. Not one single girl had ever been allowed into this curriculum.....They simply placed girls in the home economics courses as electives." In 1966 I was in Grade 11 college prep and seriously overworked with 11 courses, so I decided to drop home economics. When I informed my teacher, she said no. So my father went to my school and told the teacher that I was indeed dropping her course and that he had already informed the principal. Her reply was: "Well, she'll never amount to anything if she drops home economics."

In 1960 the Voice of Women was established, and in 1966 a number of women's organizations in Quebec organized into the Fédération des femmes du Québec. From the mid-60's there was much more participation of married women and mothers in the workforce. 1967 saw the hard-fought-for Royal Commission on the Status of Women formed. Laura Sabia was reported by the Globe and Mail to have issued an ultimatum to the Pearson government to establish a royal commission or else. "We're tired of being nice about trying to get an official enquiry into women's rights in Canada," Mrs. Sabia said. "If we don't get a royal commission by the end of this month, we'll use every tactic we can. And if we have to use violence, damn it, we will." (The Second Wave, Naomi Black, p. 87, Changing Patterns, Women in Canada)

When the Royal Commission issued their report in 1970, the **National Council of Women of Canada** and the Fédération des femmes du Québec were given advance copies so that they could prepare a summary for distribution.

In 1969 it was finally legal to advertise, display, and buy contraceptives. An amendment to the Criminal Code in 1892 had made this illegal for 77 years; in 1969 doctors could now do therapeutic abortions after a committee had given approval. This still left women at the mercy of a committee of men who could decide who would or would not be allowed an abortion. In the 1980s some provinces still had no hospitals with abortion committees, so women had to go to the U.S. or Quebec or have an illegal abortion.

"In a study of pharmaceutical advertisements between 1966 and 1983, Anne Rochon Ford discovered that menopausal women were depicted as helpless people who could not cope, who were a bother to their families, a nuisance to others, or as one advertisement phrased it, 'are beside themselves'." (The Medical Treatment of Women, Wendy Mitchinson, p. 247, Changing Patterns, Women in Canada).

In the 1970's affirmative action programs began. In 1970 maternity leave became part of the Canadian Labour Code. Women could get 11 weeks of paid leave and return to their job at the same level of pay and seniority. In 1977 the Human Rights Act enacted the principle of equal pay for work of equal value in the federal public service, however, principle did not translate into practice.

From 1950 to 1981, the number of women working outside the home rose from 10% to 51%. In 1988, women earned on average about 60 cents for every dollar a man earned.

".....during the 1970s a new cluster of sex equality cases arose in the context of the Canadian Bill of Rights. This guarantee was enshrined in Section 1 (b), which provided that:

Section 1. It is hereby recognized and declared that in Canada there have existed and shall continue to exist without discrimination by reason of race, national origin, colour, religion or sex, the following human rights and fundamental freedoms, namely.....

(b) the right of the individual to equality before the law and the protection of the law." (Women and the Law, Beverly Baines, p. 171, Changing Patterns, Women in Canada).

It was in 1985 that the equality rights provisions of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms came into effect. Section 15 provides that:

"(1) Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.

(2) Subsection (1) does not preclude any law, program or activity that has as its object the amelioration of conditions of disadvantaged individuals or groups including those that are disadvantaged because of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.

Section 28 provides that: Notwithstanding anything in this Charter, the rights and freedoms referred to in it are guaranteed equally to male and female persons." (Women and the Law, Beverly Baines, pp. 158-9, Changing Patterns, Women in Canada).

There is a Latin saying: *Perfer et obdura; dolor hic tibi proderit olim.* (Be patient and tough; someday this pain will be useful to you.)

Take pride in all that we have accomplished in the last 40 years **and know that we will persevere until women are nulli secunda — second to none.** We have a long and glorious history of being patient and tough.

**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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Articles may be emailed to the Editor at editor@ncwc.ca  
**Deadline for submission for next issue: November 15, 2007**

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# From Your Editor

By Elizabeth Hutchinson

Greetings to all members and friends of NCWC, and many thanks to all those who have sent in articles and suggestions for our Newsletter. It is always interesting to hear what is going on in different parts of the country — please continue to keep us informed. It was good to meet many of you at the AGM in Regina this summer - those who were not able to be present can get a feel of the meeting and what was discussed from several items in this issue of the Newsletter.

This issue includes several letters written by President Karen Dempsey following on the AGM. One urges the Prime Minister to follow the example of the Premier of Québec in naming equal numbers of women and men to his provincial cabinet — the first government in Canada to do so. The motion on this topic at the AGM called on LCWs and PCWs to write in similar terms to their respective provincial governments. (The text is available electronically from Cathy at the National Office.) PCWQ has translated the letter into French to forward to the Québec government and members of the opposition, with a word of congratulation, and we are also sending it to the French media and women's organizations in Québec.

One suggestion made at the AGM was that we should publish an explanation of our custom of beginning every meeting with a moment of silence. This practice dates back to Lady Aberdeen herself whose insistence on being inclusive was well ahead of her time. At that time there were people who would have excluded women of several religious or racial groups from membership in NCWC, and Christian prayer was commonly used at the beginning of civic or other meetings. Our traditional 'moment of silence' enables a wide diversity of women to participate in our meetings. At a time when 'reasonable accommodation' is being hotly debated it is good to remember our history of inclusiveness which dates back to 1893.

Another interesting point that arose at the AGM was the importance of not losing our history — archives are vital and it is all too easy to lose irreplaceable material on the death of a member if her family do not understand its importance. Remember that October is Women's History Month! The National Office has enlisted the help and advice of an archivist from the National Archives of

Canada — Shirley Browne is now NCWC Archivist. Regina CW had a most interesting display of archival material and photographs which we all appreciated looking at. We also heard from the Councils in Manitoba that they are working on an Oral History Project, for which the funding is now in place — we look forward to reading about it in a future issue of the Newsletter.

Following on this theme it has been suggested that we should include a column in the Newsletter headed « Do You Remember? » I invite you to contribute suggestions for this, perhaps memories of how and why we do things - let's not lose our history! As a starter how many of you remember the 'Partners' Concept'? It was introduced at the Montreal AGM in 1985 as a means of encouraging more involvement by our NOSs in the work of NCWC, which is still a work in progress. For several years, until the length of meetings had to be reduced to save time and expense, a group of us who were NOS representatives would meet during the AGM, perhaps over lunch, and review the meeting from the point of view of people who were not always totally familiar with NCWC policy and procedures. We would then present a report with suggestions as to how we felt things might have been improved. One result of the discussions in 1985 was the introduction of the Inter-Faith Service on Sunday morning at the AGM. We also regularly urged speakers to identify themselves, which is another work in progress!

Once again this summer NCWC has lost a notable woman in the person of Past President Ruth Hinkley whose achievements were really remarkable. Margaret MacGee attended her funeral in August and reported that it was a very celebratory occasion. I vividly remember Ruth greeting me as I walked into my first NCWC AGM in Montreal in 1985 — I was the new Anglican representative and she was an active and devoted Anglican. In later years she was a corresponding member of the Constitution Committee and used to contribute very detailed and thoughtful comments and suggestions. Let us remember her with gratitude and strive to carry on her good work.

Please remember to send in your news for the next issue by Nov 15, 2007 — we look forward to hearing from you.

## Letter on One-Tier Health Care

In response to the article in The Globe and Mail, "MDs launch fresh bid for two-tier care," Tuesday 31 July 2007.

### Universal Health Care

The National Council of Women of Canada, founded in 1893, is strongly committed to Canada's one-tier health system. Our universal health care system is one of which Canada can be very proud. NCWC have continuously urged that the universality and excellence of the medicare system in Canada be maintained. This universality has guaranteed equality of service to all citizens regardless of financial circumstances or provincial or territorial location.

The Canadian Medical Association is obviously testing the waters by initiating a debate on the right to practice in both public and private systems. The Globe article mentions that in a policy paper delivered on July 30th by the CMA, it states that governments should consider contracting publicly funded services to the private sector, that Canadians should have more access to private insurance for private care, and that doctors should not be limited to working within one system or the other.

If a two-tier system is implemented, how many doctors will stay in the medicare system? How many will devote a

majority of their time to private patients who will pay a premium? Who has first dibs on surgery time? Will the medicare patient have to wait even longer for surgery because private patients have filled the queues?

We do not understand how any two-tier system could be anything but discriminatory, and it would be just another example of "the have's" having it all, and "the have-nots" falling between ever-widening cracks.

While we acknowledge that our system of healthcare is not perfect, we and the CMA should be looking for viable ways of improving it, not dismantling it. If doctors are in short supply, train more, and actively work to have physicians with foreign credentials integrated more readily into the system. We also need shorter wait-times, but there are new projects in place which are aimed at solutions.

This sort of debate, which the outgoing president of the CMA has initiated, seems frivolous and annoying. His time would be better spent working to improve what we have, and what many other countries envy, instead of looking for ways to dismantle and demolish.

Sincerely,  
Karen Dempsey,  
President NCWC

## Re: Urgent Need for a National Water Strategy

Dear Prime Minister Harper:

On behalf of the National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC), I would like to convey, with a sense of urgency, the request of our members at our recent 114th Annual General Meeting in Regina, that you be informed of their support for the development of a national water strategy.

In passing a motion of support unanimously, we are responding to significant information collected over two years during our Canada-wide Common Program on water which built on long-standing NCWC policies, such as the need for conservation of water resources, a safe drinking water act, a national river basin management policy, groundwater protection, federal action to prevent water diversions, and continued protection and restoration of the Great Lakes ecosystem.

This important data, which clearly illuminated the many and varied threats to Canada's water, was verified and underscored by a panel of speakers at a plenary session during our AGM. These well-respected experts dealt with such issues as drought, climate change and adaptability, urbanization, pollution, water diversions, industrial abuse of water in the west, water and the law, and the urgent need for a comprehensive national water strategy.

It is this latter issue which is of critical importance if Canada is to deal effectively with the crisis facing its water. NCWC is not alone in recognizing the magnitude of our water problems, which have been with us since well before the 1987 enactment of the Federal Water Policy, and which are exacerbated by population growth, industrial and urban development, and climate change, among other stresses. Provinces and Territories, as well as many communities such as Walkerton, are struggling to find solutions, and many respected groups and individuals such as the Senate Standing Committee on Energy, Environment and Natural Resources, the Sierra Club, KAIROS, Council of Canadians, Dr. David Schindler, and Ontario's Environmental Commissioner, are speaking out about the need for immediate action.

Therefore, we feel it is increasingly important that your government take the lead immediately to develop such a water strategy, working closely with Provincial, Territorial, First Nation, and municipal governments, water experts, and the Canadian public, to ensure that this vital resource - its quantity, quality and sustainability - is protected for generations to come.

Sincerely,  
Karen Dempsey,  
President NCWC

Text prepared by: Gracia Janes,  
NCWC Vice President of Environment

## Report from the Treasurer

Bonnie L. Siemens, FLMI, CFP, CLU, CH.F.C.

It was an exciting time at the AGM in Regina, and I enjoyed meeting many of the delegates to discuss NCWC finances. As mentioned, it is my goal to overview the finances of the NCWC and to ensure we are working towards our stated budget presented at the AGM while continuing to provide NCWC with the financial resources to continue with their valuable work.

At our AGM in June, we discussed the allocation of our investment portfolio and had made changes to position it more conservatively. Therefore, effect of the recent correction in the markets and continued volatility was minimized in the portfolio as some shares had been redeemed and converted into cash within the portfolio. There are some excellent opportunities in equity positions in the markets, however we will move cautiously, as there may be continued volatility. We will discuss this with our investment broker within the mandate of the motions and discussions made at the AGM to determine if any changes should be made.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members who made cash donations directly to NCWC. These monies will be used prudently to augment our budget especially with the financial challenges that all organizations are experiencing. As you are aware, at present, NCWC is not registered as a charitable organization so we are unable to issue tax receipts for donations directly to NCWC. However, the ripple effect of a donation to NCWC will be apparent in helping support women in our communities.

Many individuals have asked me for additional information regarding charitable giving and donations, and highlighted below are some of the basic key points to do with gifts, both during your lifetime and your death. There are many types of gifts, such as the donation of cash or other securities, and there are many methods in which these gifts can be made, through annuities, charitable remainder trusts and other vehicles such as a personal foundations. Charitable giving allows you to utilize tax credits, both through simple cash gifts, or larger planned gifts. These will be discussed in greater detail in upcoming newsletters.

### TEN FACTS TO KNOW ABOUT CHARITABLE GIVING

- 1** You can make a gift during your lifetime or a bequest at your death to a charitable organization and receive a tax receipt which will give you a tax credit. National Council of Women of Canada Development Organization (NCWCDO) is an example. This organization is dedicated to the support of educational and social welfare programs to improve the quality of life for women and their families in Canada and developing countries. NCWC Education Fund can also issue tax receipts.
  - 2** If you make a gift to a non-profit organization that is not a charity, you will not receive a tax receipt. However, if you are involved in an organization that has had a positive impact in the community and made a difference in your life, you may still want to consider a donation. Many organizations would be appreciative of any cash donation made to them.
  - 3** A gift can be present, you are giving the gift now, or deferred, which will only be available in the future at your death. You can make a bequest at your death, by electing a specific amount or percentage be donated to an organization as part of your estate plan.
  - 4** Types of donations or gifts:
    - Cash
    - Gifts in Kind
    - Stocks, bonds, real estate, publicly traded stocks, art, collections, other real property
    - RRSPs or RRIFs
    - Bequests
    - Charitable Gift Annuity
    - Guarantees level income to you and an immediate gift to the charity
    - Charitable Remainder Trusts
    - Life Insurance Contracts
    - During your lifetime or at your death
  - 5** Individuals will receive a federal tax credit of 15% on the first \$200.00 donated to charity and 29% on any remaining amounts.
  - 6** You can claim the total deduction up to 75% of your net income plus 25% of any taxable capital gains.
  - 7** Donations can be used in the current year or carried back 5 years.
  - 8** Tax donations up to 100% of income can be claimed in the year of death and the preceding year. A bequest at death will not provide tax savings during your lifetime, however can have a substantial tax savings to your estate.
  - 9** If an individual is donating property, special rules regarding the amount stated on the tax receipt will apply.
  - 10** It is critical that you have a Will drawn up outlining the terms to ensure that your estate is distributed in accordance with your wishes. You must specify in your Will the terms of the gift, so your Executor will be aware of your intent. If you die "intestate", without a Will, the courts may determine how your estate will be distributed. You have no control over the outcome.
- It is very important to contact your professional advisor, including your financial planner, tax accountant and lawyer to ensure that you understand the implications of each charitable gift and how they impact your current and future situation.

## Report on the National Council of Women of Canada Common Program on Water 2006/2007

By Gracia Janes, VP Environment

In my call to action in the Fall of 2005 I noted that members *"may have had some of these (among others) media headlines in mind, when choosing **Water** as our Common Program Theme:*

- *"Walkerton disasters foreseen across Canada"* - Globe and Mail January 2001
- *"The Great Lakes -death by a thousand straws"* - Globe and Mail September 20<sup>th</sup> 2004
- *"Water growing scarce report says - Only Americans use more of this vital resource than Canadians"* - Globe and Mail, December 4<sup>th</sup> 2004
- *"PM raises Devil's Lake issue with Bush"* - Winnipeg Free Press, July 12<sup>th</sup> 2005"...

As we end our NCWC common Program on water, many of the same issues (with some twists), and others, have been in the headlines:

- *"Lake Winnipeg Stewardship Board receives expanded mandate"* - press release Manitoba Minister of Water Stewardship, February 14<sup>th</sup> 2007
- *"Water, It's cheap. It's clean. And, we take it for granted. Are we in for a rude awakening?"* - St. Catharines Standard February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2007
- *"Selling water on the agenda at three-way talks-Canada, U.S and Mexico to discuss future trade in precious resource"* - The Ottawa Citizen, April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2007
- *"Lack of funding putting Ontario's water at risk - Many municipalities unable to meet new standards for drinking systems, task force says"* - Globe and Mail June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2007
- *"Growing green, Reusing water - don't throw out the bathwater"* - CBC news July 11<sup>th</sup> 2007.
- *"Could climate change herald mass migration? Concerns raised as the U.S. southwest grapples with historic drought, water supply depletion and a creeping sense that things can only get worse."* - Toronto Star July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2007
- *"Water's clear, blue look hides unhealthy truth - Zebra mussels clean Great Lakes, but rob other aquatic life in the process"* - Toronto Star July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2007

These and many other articles were passed along to NCWC Affiliates over the past year, as we continued monitoring significant water-related issues such as the future of the Great Lakes; the Great Lakes Annex Treaties and the ongoing issue of potential water diversions to water-hungry areas of the US; Lake Winnipeg — a lake under extreme stress; the Lake Erie "dead-zone"; and the need for ground water protection.

What follows is a brief synopsis of our many activities this past year, with links to some where underlined. The sources of the information are in brackets for Local and Provincial Councils.

### PROVINCIAL COUNCILS OF WOMEN

#### British Columbia

British Columbia Provincial Council of Women again monitored water issues such as the exemption of the US Navy

from the provincial ban on conducting sonar tests off the coasts of BC and the significant damage to fish from large container ship pollution. (Rosemary Mallory and Florence Irwin)

#### Manitoba

Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba continued to keep a close eye on water issues, particularly Lake Winnipeg, as evidenced by the excellent article in its November 2006 newsletter: Lake Winnipeg: **Responses to a Lake Under Stress**, by Diane F. Malley and Jennifer V. Lukovich. The article is replete with good references, such as the web sites for the excellent report, *'Restoring the Health of Lake Winnipeg*, by the Lake Winnipeg Research Consortium group, and the report from a March 2006 Lake Winnipeg Environmental Forum, *'Saving Lake Winnipeg'*. The article also notes the *"increased attention by politicians and scientists as well as rising public awareness on the critical state of Lake Winnipeg as the 10<sup>th</sup> largest freshwater lake in the world."* (Mary Scott)

#### Ontario

Provincial Council of Women of Ontario continued to monitor the state of the Great Lakes and many other water issues. They reported the passage of Provincial legislation, The Clean Water Act, to ensure clean water sources for Ontarians- a critical outcome of the highly reported Walkerton, Ontario tragedy. As noted in the above media headline, Zebra mussels are a seemingly intransigent threat to the Great Lakes, and how to keep the ocean going ships from bringing these types of exotic aquatic species into the lakes, continues to be a subject of debate. A new potential problem has arisen regarding one of the Great Lakes, as Ontario Power Generation proposes to bury low and intermediate level non-fuel nuclear waste near the shores of Lake Huron. NCWC sent a letter to the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission opposing these dubious plans. PCWO incoming President Thelma McGillivray also attended one of several important meetings regarding the future of the Great Lakes, hosted by Ontario's Environmental Commissioner, Gordon Miller and Pollution Probe. These were held in Kingston, Hamilton, Thunder Bay and Windsor. Thelma passed along a Pollution Probe report *'Towards a Vision and Strategy for Water Management in Canada'*, which was a result of Pollution Probe's research and its Water Policy in Canada National Workshop Series' meetings across Canada, which featured over seventy water experts. The report is available at [www.pollutionprobe.org](http://www.pollutionprobe.org). A report from the Hamilton meeting will be available at the same site. (Gracia Janes and Thelma McGillivray)

### LOCAL COUNCILS OF WOMEN

#### Hamilton and District Council of Women

At the 2006 Provincial Council of Women of Ontario Annual General Meeting in Hamilton local Aboriginal women's advocate, Elize Hartley spoke about Women Power and that women are keepers of Water. As she said *"This gift was given to women by the*

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*Creator. We are bound by our instructions from the Creator to protect water from pollution and do all in our power to bring attention to our lakes and oceans. A group of Aboriginal women walked around the Great Lakes to get the attention of the media. They walked every year, in the summer, around one of the Great Lakes. They finished this year with Lake Ontario." (Thelma McGillivray)*

#### **Edmonton Council of Women**

Dr. Suzanne Bayley, professor of biology at the University of Regina, whose expertise is wetlands and watersheds, spoke to the Edmonton Council regarding the work she and her husband, renowned water expert, Dr. David Schindler, have done to document the erosion of glaciers and the drying up of lakes throughout the prairie provinces. With comprehensive, detailed statistics and pictures Dr. Bayley showed the dramatic changes in glaciers and lakes over a 20 year period. Edmonton Council members asked her what individuals could do to make a difference. Her answer was to become informed, conserve water ourselves, and put in a good word for the scientists and organizations that are trying to convince governments at all levels to be more responsible regarding water resources, including the "gobbling up of wetlands for urban development." (Joyce Backstrom)

#### **Ottawa Council of Women**

Ottawa' Council's speaker on water this year was Meredith Brown, of the Ottawa Riverkeeper, a group that is part of the Riverkeeper Alliance, founded by Robert Kennedy. Its mandate is to protect and enhance the ecological health and integrity of the Ottawa River. Ms. Brown spoke of the importance of the Ottawa River watershed, which is the second largest in eastern Canada, and, having 1,271 kms of watershed, the largest tributary of the St. Lawrence River.

Over 1,670,000 people live in the watershed in more than 250 communities, from shining Tree, Ontario in the west, to St. Jérôme, Quebec in the east; from Westport, Ontario in the south, to Launay, Quebec in the north. Its governance is a jurisdictional quagmire, as it runs through dozens of municipalities, two thirds of them in Quebec, and one third in Ontario. The most populous sub-watersheds are in the lower valley.

There are nine dams generating electricity and eight pulp mills on the river, but the greatest source of pollution is partially-treated municipal waste water. The most polluted water is observed in the lower 150km stretch from Ottawa/Gatineau to the confluence with the St. Lawrence River. Heavy metals, radioactive waste and agricultural run-off also add to further deterioration as does urban development in the flood plain and the destruction of wetlands.

As a result of Ms. Brown's enlightening presentation, many Ottawa Council members bought the Ottawa Riverkeeper's report, or took out memberships in the Riverkeepers Organization in order to support its worthwhile work. (Denise Mattock)

#### **St. Catharines and District Council of Women**

St. Catharines Council has continued to be concerned regarding the impact of waste management, particularly the interest by some municipalities in incineration. Therefore its first speaker of the year was John Jackson, a well known waste management expert, who noted the dangers to our waterways of the outflows from highly toxic fly ash, and the need for very

secure landfill sites for both the fly and bottom ash. St. Catharines also monitored the new provincial regulations for the Clean Water Act, and their emphasis on the protection of water sources. (Gracia Janes)

#### **Vancouver Council of Women**

Being on the Pacific Ocean, with the Fraser River to the south and the Burrard Inlet to the north, Vancouver is at the centre of water-related issues and Council of Women meetings frequently featured water topics. Council concerns these past two years were flooding, depletion of fish stocks and pollution. Re the latter, last year Vancouver had the first ever boil-water advisory; and experienced major wind storms, where the majority of trees in Stanley Park were destroyed. As President Rosemary Mallory notes "The global climatic changes will affect the water situation in Vancouver, and we may not always have the best water in the world, as we do now." A featured speaker for Council in 2006 was Dr. Hans Schreier, Professor at the Institute for Environment at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. He gave an outstanding lecture on water i.e. "All you ever wanted to know about water-other than, Is it safe to drink?" Dr. Schreier's research focuses on watershed management and his work is featured on several web sites (just google his name.) (Rosemary Mallory)

### **NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF CANADA**

#### **Letters to Government**

As a direct result of the Common Program and our heightened awareness two letters were sent to the Prime Minister in the first half of 2007. The first letter was sent the day before World Water Day, and stated, among other things "*May I take this opportunity to stress, on behalf of the many thousands of National Council of Women members, the need for your government to join many other governments world-wide in recognizing that water is a fundamental right for people the world over. May we also urge your government to act quickly to address the many threats to Canadian waters.*" We further commended the governments' investment of \$400 million for a Great Lakes water clean up, but went on to state that "*the most important issue is the crises facing our Canadian waters, above and below ground, in lakes, rivers and oceans. Unfortunately, budget cuts over the past several years have severely curtailed federal water programs. This is well documented in the Senate Report of 2005, Water in the West: Under Pressure. For example, there have been cutbacks in investments in longitudinal water studies, the National Water Research Institute, the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Program and the mapping of aquifers.*"

A second letter was sent as a direct result of a resolution at the Regina June 2<sup>nd</sup> Panel on Water at our 114th AGM, which asked the President to inform the Prime Minister of our support for the development of a national water strategy. The text of this letter is printed elsewhere in this Newsletter.

#### **Panel on Water at the 114th NCWC AGM Meeting in Regina**

The Panel on Water at our 114<sup>th</sup> AGM in Regina, was a particularly suitable and very successful conclusion to our two year Common Program on Water. The program was funded by the Duncan and Walter Gordon foundation, and over 60 delegates, plus members of the public, heard six water experts from across Canada speak on a huge diversity of serious water issues facing Canadians. Further information from the Panel may be found on our web site [www.ncwc.ca](http://www.ncwc.ca) and a report from Elizabeth Fleming, NCWC Environment Convener, is printed elsewhere in this issue of the Newsletter.

## Getting Energized on Energy - NCWC Common Programme 2007-2009

By Elizabeth Fleming

When it came time in Regina to choose the next topic for the National Council of Women of Canada common programme 2007-2009 there was much thoughtful debate. The result was "Energy in all its aspects".

Energy, like the previous topic, "Water", is broad and complicated. Some of us are wondering where to start to organize programmes to educate ourselves and the public about energy over the next two years

A quick look at NCWC resolutions shows the track record. We have been developing energy policy since the Seventies. Much research and discussion have gone into alternate and renewable energy; energy conservation; tax incentives for sustainable forms of energy and even an emergency resolution urging the Government of Canada to ensure a complete joint environmental assessment on the James Bay II project (1991). The most recent resolution (1998) was to request the National Energy Board to investigate the effects of changes in energy demand. NCWC nuclear energy policy includes a Nuclear/Energy/Future policy update (2004). Also relevant is a 1999 policy update on Taking Action on Global Climate Change.

Looking ahead, there are many useful sources of information on energy. To see what is happening at the federal or provincial government level, log on to Natural Resources Canada and your provincial Department of Energy web-site. The Hill Times had a useful energy policy briefing from each of the federal parties and several non-government groups in its June 4, 2007 edition. Energy was on the agenda of the premiers this summer. The Council of the Federation posted information on its web-site:

<http://www.councilofthefederation.ca/newsroom/energymaps.html>.

Other sources are Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy, National Petroleum Institute, hydro utilities and the public utilities boards that set rates, to name a few. National and local media carry many articles on energy and related climate change. Energy is also on the agenda of the secret Security & Prosperity Partnership talks between Canada, the United States and Mexico.

There are several angles to take on energy. One piece of the puzzle, the Energy Picture, shows the energy generation (total generation 4,730 terawatt hours) by fuel type for North America in 2004: <http://www2.nrcan.gc.ca/es/es/NA-energpic2006/p04e.htm>

The pie chart shows the following breakdown in energy sources:

- Coal 45%
- Petroleum 4%
- Natural gas 17%
- Nuclear power 9%
- Hydro power 13%
- Other renewables 2%

This North American snapshot can be compared with the energy sources in each province. In Manitoba, for example, hydro-electric power is a major source of energy with no nuclear and minimal coal.

In the Fall, the Manitoba government will re-introduce a biofuels bill that will mandate a proportion of ethanol in gasoline. The federal government is co-funding the expansion of a Husky Energy plant that distils ethanol from wheat in Manitoba. For its October 17 programme, the Manitoba and Winnipeg Councils have teamed up with other organizations to host an expert panel on Biofuels: Solution or Problem?

The Council of Women of Winnipeg is sponsoring a series of five noon lectures on the theme, Energy Options For Our Future. Carolyn Garlich, environment chair, has organized the year's programmes with well-qualified speakers. Upcoming titles are:

- Missing the Boat on Renewable Energy;
- Atomic Energy: A Solution to Global Warming?;
- Your Home: How to Save Energy, Money and the Environment;
- Power Smart Energy Pricing; and
- Facing the Energy Challenges of the next Two Decades.

The speaker for the latter will be Vaclav Smil, Distinguished Professor, University of Manitoba, who has written extensively on the topic and is recognized internationally.

Besides the ideas above, there are many more directions to take with energy. We may want to update NCWC policies. Please call on Gracia Janes or me if you wish and keep us posted on your energy and environment activities.

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# SENIORS as PARTNERS in ENVIRONMENTAL EMERGENCIES

By *Thelma McGillivray, President PCWO*

## Report on Canadian Association of Retired Persons National Roundtable: June 2007

Thank you for asking me to represent OCSCO at this very timely workshop. I attended a similar presentation about five years ago, hosted by the Provincial Council of Women, on the need for a co-ordinated plan for medical personnel in response to an environmental emergency. This CARP workshop however offered a much broader perspective but sent essentially the same message, that is, Be Prepared!

There were 3 Panels of experts who presented throughout the Roundtable. Panel 1: "Setting the Stage: National and International Initiatives", on the evening of June 21<sup>st</sup>, which set up the background and theme and stimulated relevant input from the registrants. In the morning of June 22<sup>nd</sup>, Panel 2 experts spoke on "Community-Level Challenges and Responses". This presentation laid out the concerns, the role of volunteers, as well as the role of service agencies and governments toward a cohesive response to a public emergency. Approximately 50 attendees then split into 4 facilitated group discussion sessions to answer 4 questions: what predisposes seniors' risk vulnerability; their special needs; their needs for supports following the disaster; and our ideas on how to both assist seniors in need and how to engage seniors as volunteers in the event of an environmental emergency. My group was vocal on this and recorders from the 4 groups reported back to the larger group.

After lunch, Panel 3 experts focused from the general to the specific on the topic: "Heat Waves: Seniors' Health Risks and Lessons Learned". This topic was very apropos given the current debate, for example, on a Heat Alert Policy taking place in Toronto and Hamilton, ON. Due to time constraints and to accommodate people who were travelling, the second planned small group discussions were replaced by the larger group format. The questions were similar to the morning but more specific to the high risk of seniors; their special needs; follow-up supports for seniors during and after a Heat Wave; and once again, how to identify and assist vulnerable seniors as well as engage seniors as volunteers.

Briefly, aging is the most important social, economic and environmental challenge of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. In Canada as of 2006, there are 3.5 million senior citizens. Climate change, rapid and uneven economic development and population aging mean that more people will be affected by more emergencies in the most vulnerable communities. The three critical areas of proactive response in an Emergency or Natural Disaster is: Who Is Responding (Pre-Disaster) - What Are They Doing (During the Disaster) and What is The Follow-Up (Post-Disaster). Many suggestions and ideas were offered. The Next Steps suggested were: more workshops immediately, get the message out through whatever media, and most importantly "put a face on it" as was done on Poverty for example. (Replies were carefully recorded and a full report with recommendations is promised at a later date).

This workshop was packed full of information and high-calibre speakers, but required another day fully to cover the Expected Outcomes which were to be gleaned from the representatives for seniors. This was somewhat hurried. Nevertheless, this was a valuable and timely workshop for seniors. It offered much information by experts analyzing real catastrophic natural

disasters, such as hurricanes in the southern U.S. Some facts of the aftermath, i.e. New Orleans, were shared in depth with us that were not covered previously by national media. Canada, has had many environmental emergency events as well; the Ice Storm; Red River Floods; Fires in the West; SARS; and Nova Scotia's hurricane Juan to name a few.

On that note, I personally recall Hurricane Hazel in the mid- 1950s, the Mississauga Chemical Train Spill in 1980, and exactly 10 years ago (July 9, 1997) the Plastimet fire in Hamilton, the worst toxic fire in Canadian history. This disaster was a catalyst for change in that municipalities were forced to be more vigilant with their industrial buildings housing hazardous materials. I used the foregoing to point out examples of unexpected events. At the same time what these occurrences have in common is that the public perceives each one as a random, isolated happening and once the panic settled down, denial appears to have set in, as though people were thinking, "oh well, only a few people were affected by the consequences", and thus the demand for any future prevention or an Emergency Plan is ignored.

What I learned in the Heat Wave presentations was that the vulnerability of older women is shocking. For example:

**1984** - New York heat wave: aged 75-84 years, death rates - 39% for men and 66% for women, over 85 years old, 13% for men and 55% for women.

**1995** - Chicago heat wave: 800 deaths - 66% women

**2003** - France heat wave - deaths 14,802 -in all age groups female mortality was 20% higher than males and in 80+ age group 66% were women.

Some of the official evaluation findings on the Chicago Heat Wave were that people died because they refused to go out of their apartments, did not open their windows, and did not drink water. What the presenters did not cover was that another study carried out by a Sociology student explored and studied two other communities in the surrounding area and found the following: Yes, in one community, where the deaths were higher, people did die because they feared going out of their homes in case of break-ins and they themselves would be robbed; whereas in the other community where deaths were minimal, the residents felt quite safe on their streets; there were shops, banks, and recreation centres nearby where they were known; they knew and trusted the neighbours and felt welcome and safe and could visit and cool off and get their needs met. The lesson here is that one needs to factor in all the social conditions whenever the outcome of an environmental emergency is studied.

So what is to be done? It seems that none of the events has evolved into a required legislated Disaster Plan, for every community, as one might expect as an outcome. Without legislation, it is doubtful such a Plan will come about. As it would be, for example, if we were in a state of war, such as in places like Israel, a model of response that Canada could well do to study as a start.

CARP has planned a further International Workshop on Seniors and Emergency Preparedness in Winnipeg scheduled for March 2008. I would recommend that PCWM & CWW look into being represented there.

# REGINA

## Regina Hosts the 114th NCWC Annual Meeting

*by Louise Hornung and Roberta Swetlow,  
Co-Presidents, Regina Council of Women*

The Regina Council of Women considered it a privilege to host the 114th NCWC Annual General Meeting in Regina. What a pleasure it was to meet the other members from across Canada and share ideas and concerns. Assisting Cathy at the registration desk on Thursday gave us a chance to personally welcome the ladies as they came to register and also provided us with an opportunity to chat with Cathy. Our memories of the many hours spent cutting and sewing all the tote bags soon vanished as we proudly distributed them to all the smiling registrants on their arrival. Their gratefulness was very much appreciated.

Our weatherman could have been a little kinder at the beginning but no one complained and, to our delight, we were able to showcase "sunny Saskatchewan" the last few days.

A relaxed musical atmosphere at the Opening Reception was very enjoyable and the ladies had time to renew old acquaintances and meet new friends while nibbling on tasty hors-d'oeuvres and other goodies. The "sing-along" was a nice touch to end the evening.

Carla Kozak did an excellent job of chairing the plenary sessions and kept things moving along as scheduled. All in all, the business portion of the AGM was very well organized by Carla, Cathy and other members of the executive. The Resolutions generated lots of interesting, informative discussion.

The Treasurer's report, by Bonnie Siemens, was well presented and easy to follow. We are pleased with the

changes being implemented to reduce costs and ensure the future of our organization.

The public meeting held on Saturday afternoon featuring six excellent speakers on the topic of Canada's Water was very interesting and informative. It is extremely unfortunate that more people were not aware of this open meeting as many of our federates and other citizens of Regina would have attended. Also, it is disappointing that such an important issue was not covered by the local newspaper, radio stations and television stations.

We were appreciative of the Regina Inn staff who were "super nice" to us and were always available to assist with any requests or changes. From all reports, everyone enjoyed the accommodations, meals and refreshment breaks.

It is always a challenge to organize and carry out an event, however, through the determination and co-operation of Laura Ross and RCW members, Carla Kozak and Cathy Tillsley, together we "met the challenge".

RCW is extremely proud to be part of an organization comprised of highly intelligent, dedicated women who give time and commitment to make their communities and country a better place.

We wish all Councils well with their endeavours over the next year and look forward to seeing you in Ottawa next year!

We hope you enjoyed your brief stay in Regina and will plan a trip back here again in the future.



Cutline?

## AGM Report

By Bonnie Lee Smith, VP NCWC

### 114 years and going strong!

I attended the 114<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the National Council of Women in Regina, Saskatchewan, from May 31<sup>st</sup> to June 3<sup>rd</sup>. The following are my comments on this fascinating event.

First, the women from Regina Council were commended for their hospitality (they wanted to give us a "warm western welcome" they said) and for their efforts to make our stay in Regina enjoyable. Thanks also go to Cathy Tillsley, Executive Director of the national office for ensuring that everything needed was prepared and the meeting went smoothly.

Second, I can't emphasize enough how interesting and helpful I find AGMs (this was the 4th one I've attended) and this one was no exception. I find that talking to women from across the country about what they are doing in their local and provincial councils, and listening to their views and opinions about the resolutions and so on is almost the only time that I have a good sense of what's going on nationally. At AGMs I also feel our strength and power as a national organization. Very important.

Third, because the common program for the past two years was "Water", Gracia Janes, VP environment organized a half day seminar on the subject. She obtained funding for the event and brought in experts on the subject who presented various aspects of water - sources, impact of climate change, use, government policy. For my part, the most interesting thing about the session was the diversity of perspectives and opinions given by the panelists.

*(Editorial note — see the detailed account of the event by NCWC Environment Convener Elizabeth Fleming.)*

Fourth, the common program chosen for the coming two years is "Energy". It was thought that we should capitalize on the current widespread public interest in this issue. There was a great deal of enthusiasm for "Energy" and many people were heard talking about what they might do within their own councils to address this topic.

Finally, as you know, the AGM next year will be in Ottawa again. Because it is the 115<sup>th</sup> AGM (imagine !!) it will be something very special. I for one, and of course I'm not alone, will be doing all sorts of things in the coming months to ensure that many people from both Montreal and Quebec Councils attend the meeting. To be continued.

## Canada's Water

By Elizabeth Fleming - Environment Convener

The National Council of Women of Canada's two-year Common Programme on Water wound up with a splash at the AGM in Regina. Thanks to the work of NCWC Vice-President for Environment, Gracia Janes, the public heard a panel of six well-qualified water specialists discuss various aspects of "Canada's Water".

**Dr. Dave Sauchyn** is Professor of Geography and PARC-Manitoba Hydro Research Professor, Prairie Adaptation Research Collaborative at the University of Regina.

Dr. Sauchyn noted that there is never a "normal" year for water on the Prairies. Most of the water on the western Prairies comes from the Rockies and, in Saskatchewan, from the North and South Saskatchewan Rivers. Water drains towards the northeast, away from where most Canadians settle in the south. Immigrants have lived on the Prairies for about 120 years. We know there were especially dry years in the 1980s and 1930s but we have limited experience of

longer term climate change. To examine earlier wet and dry changes, researchers studied diatoms in the mud collected from three lakes on the Prairies and the rings of Lodgepole pine trunks found in old log buildings. These studies reveal at least fifteen previous periods of significantly prolonged extreme weather events.

Although there has been a natural variation in temperature over the centuries, the added affect of people has led to a much steeper increase in temperature and CO<sub>2</sub>.

Computer modelling indicates that we can expect a mean annual temperature increase on the Prairies. The effect on precipitation is less clear. We could have a longer summer but with less precipitation at the time when crops need water the most. Snow is a tremendous source of water. The dry years of 2001 and 2002 cost Saskatchewan \$2.4-billion in crop losses.

Forewarned is forearmed. Much can be achieved through adaptation, that is, adjustments in practices, processes or structure of systems to projected or actual changes of

*continued on page 12*

climate. Farmers work on soil and water conservation. Climate change is an opportunity to develop new and better policies, technology, institutions and infrastructure.

Dr. Sauchyn is hopeful. He and his wife have started a winery on their Alberta farm.

**Dick Peters** is Network Coordinator for KAIROS, Prairies North Region. Mr. Peters is retired from a career in the industrial risk and insurance management field in Canada.

KAIROS started a water campaign in 2005. This year they are still raising awareness and campaigning against the privatization of water. 180 municipalities in Canada have signed a statement that water is not a commodity.

The development of the Alberta tar sands present huge profits for the developers but at the cost of watershed damage; large lakes of contaminated water; and concern about cancer rates in Fort Chipewyan on the shore of Lake Athabasca. Free access has been granted by government to the industry. Enormous amounts of steam and water are needed to separate the sand from the oil. The Pembina Institute has noted a 3-foot drop in the level of the Athabasca River

**Darrin Qualman** is Director of Research for the National Farmer’s Union and works with the Saskatchewan Environmental Society on water issues.

There is a real threat to divert waters south but there is time to change. The plan started 50 years ago with the Gardiner Dam on the South Saskatchewan River followed by twenty more reservoirs. Diversions are very close to - but not yet across - the boundary with the United States.

**The Highgate Dam proposal on the North Saskatchewan River near North Battleford is part of a larger plan to build several dams in Saskatchewan and to divert northern water south. Agrivision Corporation has put forward a multi-billion dollar plan to build four big dams (21 were originally proposed) at a cost of \$20-billion.**

What is not going to get built if we proceed? The environmental cost is huge - fragmented ecosystems and loss of diversity; lost habitat upstream and down; mercury contamination; CO2 emissions from reservoirs; and altered water temperatures and chemistry.

We need a global conversation on dams. There is a World Commission on Dams.

**Margot Hurlbert** has practiced law in the private sector and at SaskPower in Regina. Ms. Hurlbert is currently an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Arts, University of Regina, specializing in critical legal studies, Environmental Justice (climate change and water) and Aboriginal Justice.

The British North America Act (1867) did not deal with water. In 1930, jurisdiction for natural resources was transferred to the provinces. Canadian laws follow British law regarding the right to use water. Each province developed similar laws on water allocation associated with property rights, land titles, etc. Use is ranked with public consumption highest followed by industrial and other “lesser” uses like irrigation.

The federal government has jurisdiction over water in federal parks; on First Nations (although the latter would argue that they have jurisdiction); and over fisheries and oceans; international boundaries and international flows of water across boundaries. The federal government can pass environmental laws and laws over peace, order and good government. The provinces have delegated responsibility for drinking water to municipal governments.

The public needs to remain diligent on water exports. Canada responded to public pressure in 1998 with federal legislation to prevent the diversion of water from our water bodies.

Canadians see water as sacred, not as an economic good or commodity. Saskatchewan and Alberta measure up quite well against the World Water Policies and Best Practices document. Canada has a predictable system in regard to water. We have public participation through local advisory councils on water.

Rather than concentrate on the quantity of water, we should pay more attention to the fragmentation of water quality and quantity. For example, an industry wants to start a business using water but we need to mind the effect downstream.

**Susan Howatt** is National Water Campaigner with the Council of Canadians. Previously, Ms. Howatt was an international campaigner based in Jakarta, Indonesia for the Mining Network.

We are in a global water crisis. 2.6 billion people, one third of the world’s population, do not have access to basic water. According to Environment Canada, 25% of our municipalities are facing water shortages.

Climate change and the tar sands are driving the drain in Alberta. Extraction requires a ratio of between 2 - 6 of water to produce one barrel of oil. We are also neglecting to maintain our water infrastructure, e.g. replace water pipes. About one third of First Nations do not have basic water services. We face water pollution and contamination such as happened in Walkerton and North Battleford. Canada does not have a national water policy. There is a patchwork of provincial jurisdictions. Municipalities are under pressure to deliver water. A national water policy should include municipalities.

There is the threat of treating water as a commodity. The bottled water industry is booming. The legal case of a B.C.

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company that sued when it was ordered to stop bulk water export is stalled.

The Council of Canadians is pushing to have more openness around the Security and Prosperity Partnership discussions that are being held outside the Canadian, U.S. and Mexican parliaments. The 1948, U.N. Declaration of Human Rights did not include water. Unfortunately, it was Canada that voted in 2002, 2003 and 2006 against recognizing water as a human right. Many people are becoming involved in WaterWatch groups.

**Timothy Morris**, a lawyer, is National Water Campaigner for the Sierra Club of Canada. Mr. Morris is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of British Columbia. His graduate research relates to policy reforms for adapting to climate change impacts on water resources.

The Sierra Club is preparing a paper, Changing the Flow. It is a blueprint for Federal Action on a National Water Policy. Climate change, tar sands, dams, crumbling infrastructure, water quality, bulk water exports, rapid urban growth are all dislocated from Canada's hydrological picture. Dr. David Schindler has pointed out that we don't have as much water as we think we have.

John Sprague, in his book, "Eau, Canada", writes about the myth of abundance. We have a lot of glacier water but it is not replaceable. Canada has 20% of the world's freshwater but we waste water and have the highest individual consumption of water after the U.S..

There is a lack of water governance in Canada, especially at the federal level. The Conference Board of Canada has said we are not ready for the challenges ahead, including economic growth and climate change. There is a mixed bag at the provincial level with some good things happening. We need to preserve the national re-charge or else we could face the water failures seen in the Murray-Darling watershed in Australia and the Aral Sea in Asia.

After the deep cuts to federal water programmes in the 1990s, we have hit a low point. Canada now needs federal action involving all levels of government to develop a National Water Strategy to share in stewardship. The key areas are:

1. **Climate crisis**
2. **Drinking water**
3. **Boundary water/ trans-boundary waters**

Europe, Australia, South Africa and New Zealand have worked to develop coordinated approaches to water. Benefits are improved coordination, greater government accountability, more effective information sharing and greater equity in access to water.

All of the other panelists responded positively to the call for a National Water Strategy. They then took questions from the floor.



## **BITS & BYTES**

*By Mary Scott, VP NCWC*

### **What's New in the World of IT??**

After a summer away from our computers, it doesn't necessarily mean we have been away from technology. It's amazing

how dependent we are on cell phones for example. Although I don't own a Blackberry, I understand those that have them, and take them on their holidays, regret it. Where I spend much of the summer is really away from it all. Remote in that there is no electricity, not true, we do have solar, but that is limited; no cell phone connection, not even a store!! We do have a radio phone, and that helps if there is an emergency, or family chats. Not even a newspaper.

One of the miracles of the electronic age though that I do bring along, and grew really to like, might be something you might want to explore. Or if you are already using it, send in your suggestions. These are podcasts. You download them from the internet, not hard really, and load them on to an MP 3 player or if

you're lucky enough to own one, an iPod. You can always get your kids to help you (or your grandkids). I actually use my Palm Pilot, as it has a very small disk drive to hold extras, and has RealPlayer (a free program) that plays music and podcasts in MP 3 format.

Why I suggest you might want to look at podcasts is that it allows you to play some of the excellent CBC programs that you have missed. You can listen when it's convenient to you. Programs such as The Current. They had an excellent program on the history and current thinking on the India-Pakistan partition, another on Karl Rove, and one on the recent Cabinet shuffle. Another favourite CBC program is Dispatches, with news from all over the world. So before I left, I downloaded the most recent ones, and had a selection of listening - and learning more about far away places, like the Congo, Gaza, Santiago, Antananarivo, and Nairobi. A recent program features a profile of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt.

Sure, it doesn't replace reading, but the CBC podcasts do give us an opportunity to get an in depth coverage of some pretty important local and global issues, that I appreciate. If you have recommendations of podcasts, send them to me at [mary\\_scott@shaw.ca](mailto:mary_scott@shaw.ca). And if you would like to check out the CBC podcasting home page, go to: <http://www.cbc.ca/podcasting/>.

## St Catherine's & District

By Mary Potter

The St. Catharines & District Council of Women completed a suitcase show of Celebrating Women in the spring of 2007 with sales over \$3000.00. Our approach was to ask our affiliates to include the Celebrating Women display at one of their meetings and several agreed to do so. The most successful sales were at our Ukrainian organizations especially at coffee hour after a church service at one Ukrainian church. We found it helpful that a member of our Board who owns a home-based business volunteered to store the items and it was covered by her insurance.

Our Council is preparing to host a Baby Fair on October 15 at which non-profit services and retail stores dealing with babies and new parents rent tables for their display. Admission is free and we will have a baby change area, babysitting, and lunch available. We are partnering with the Niagara Regional Health Department who will distribute our flyers to all their prenatal and breastfeeding classes. Our other partner is Meridian Credit Union who has donated \$500 toward advertizing and a \$500 RESP for a door prize.

## Montréal

By Sandra Cohen Rose

### The Future is Bright

This year we look forward to another busy, rewarding year for the MCW. Last year fifteen new Federates joined the MCW, plus a number of individual members, thanks to the efforts of our past president and now NCWC V-P, Bonnie Lee Smith. We hope to continue to attract new federates and members, and most importantly, retain our present membership.

Our diversity, our strength and our growth, were celebrated at our May Annual Meeting where we honoured our new Federates and individual members by awarding them special certificates. At the opening of our celebration, Mme J. Montpetit, the mayor of South-West Borough, the borough in which our meetings are held, delivered a thoughtful message, which set the tone for a delightful afternoon.

Monthly noon lectures preceded by lunch are well attended and attract new members. A different Federate provides and hosts the lunches. Proceeds go towards sending the president to the NCWC Annual Convention. Our Women of the Year Luncheon will be on November 28, 2007. Anyone planning to visit Montreal is most welcome to attend MCW events, which can be found on our website.

At the NCWC AGM the MCW's resolution, that sweets be removed from below the counter at the checkout lane was defeated by a 129 to 139 margin. In light of the obesity epidemic

amongst children, and its toll on individuals, families, the Medicare system, the government budget and the environment, we will resubmit it next year. It is part of the NCWC theme for the next two years, Energy - all aspects. We are very excited by this theme, as Energy lends itself to many areas of exploration, from the energy we use to drive our cars and lawn mowers to that we consume to run our bodies.

Our continued dialogue with Montreal City Hall will address issues that affect us, including saving buildings for adaptive reuse. This not only saves our communities and heritage, but also Energy and our environment.

The monthly MCW Bulletin has had a number of additions including a section on "Caring for Our Environment." Shortly the MCW will have a new web site, which will be linked to our Federates and other groups that have common goals.

## New Westminster

By Florence Erwin

### Air India Memorial in Vancouver

On Friday, July 27, 2007 New Westminster LCW President, Florence Erwin and Council member Banu Saklikar, in the company of Banu's daughter Renee Sarojini Saklikar and husband Adrian Dix, MLA (NDP Health Critic), attended the dedication of the Air India Memorial in Stanley Park. This is one of several Memorial Sites across Canada.

In the package provided the Memorial is described as:  
"The Air India Memorial in Vancouver's Stanley Park creates a place of remembrance and hope for the future. The full project consists of the memorial itself and a children's playground.

The crafted stone wall, the main feature of the memorial, rises from the ground in an arc, and then ends abruptly. This represents the trajectory of Flight 182 from the point where it left Canada to the point where it crashed into the sea off the coast of Ireland. The name of each individual who perished in the tragedy is etched in the wall's monumental stone cap. At the end of the wall is a stone from Ahakista, Ireland. This stone frames the view of the ocean; the literal and symbolic connection linking this memorial site to the site of the Air India Flight 182 catastrophe. Three hundred and thirty one stones are set in the lawn, representing the number of victims lost in this tragedy.

Ceperley playground is adjacent to the memorial. Elements that encourage collective play and cooperation between children are the focus of the playground. Nearby, a stand of dove trees, which have white handkerchief shaped blossoms, have been planted as living symbols of peace."

The inclusion of the playground recognizes the fact that 82 children died in this tragedy.



**National Council of Women of  
Canada Development  
Organization**

**Organisation de développement  
du conseil national des femmes  
du Canada**

by Arlene Draffin Jones, Chairperson

## COUNCILS OF WOMEN IN ACTION !!

Established by the National Council of Women of Canada in 1985, the **NCWCDO** is a Registered Charitable Organization \*. NCWCDO is dedicated to the support of projects, in Canada and in developing countries, which are directed to educational and social welfare programs to improve the quality of life for women and their families.

Specific projects such as wells to provide for pure water; a social or a cultural facility to be available for recreation, health clinics, crafts, adult education, health, nutrition and sanitation courses contribute to the general well-being of all members of a designated community. The projects help to empower women receiving the grants and, at the same time, they provide opportunities for provincial and local councils to become aware of the global conditions for women and children.

The NCWCDO is an example of the *Councils of Women in Action*.

### **REPORT from the NCWCDO Annual Meeting and Luncheon held in Regina, Saskatchewan, June 2, 2007**

Guest speaker was Janis Rapchuk from **Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan (CW4WA)**. Janis, a librarian from Calgary shared the experiences of her trip to visit Fatema Tul Zahra the school in the centre of Kabul that received funding from the NCWCDO last year to help pay the salaries for two teachers. She told of the heartbreaking work of Bibi Hajji who struggles against tremendous odds to try and provide an education for the children. Janis brought an array of beautiful boutique items (scarves, blouses, jewellery and bags) made by women in Afghanistan to sell at the event. The money will go to the Breaking Bread for Women in Afghanistan fund that raises money to pay teachers' salaries. An estimated 50,000 girls are in school today because of this program.

### **Highlights from the 2007 Annual Meeting**

The results of the recommendations for the distribution of the \$2,600.00 for 2007 project grants were as follows:

**SMILE Foundation (\$1000.00).** Literacy Enhancement and Non-formal education through Empowerment of Adolescent Girls program in Village Councils areas of Orissa state, India. Monies will go towards funds for periodic lady doctor visits; a functional literacy teacher; exercise books, cutting/sorting machine; books and stationary for educational and literacy classes.

**Literacy Alliance of West Nipissing (\$775.00).**

A volunteer Literacy and Basic Skills organization that targets adults aged 19 and over. The bulk of the learners are women of all ages, from young mothers to Elders, and different ethnic backgrounds. Funding will go towards a media centre with a large screen plasma TV and a digital video recorder.

**Empowering Women of Burma (\$600.00).**

Mission/Goals of the Organization: to improve the quality of life of women and children in the Refugee Camps of Burmese (Myanmar) minorities who are not admitted into Thailand because the latter State has never signed the UN Convention on Refugees. Funding will help train nursery school teachers and provide basic school supplies, nutritious lunches for the children and support candle making.

**City for All Women Initiative (CAWI)/Initiative: une ville pour toutes les femmes (IVTF) located in Ottawa (\$225.00).**

The mission/goals of the organization are to strengthen the capacity of the full-diversity of women and the City of Ottawa to work in partnership so as to create a more inclusive city and promote gender equality. Funding will enable many of the low-income women to participate in the Action Teams dealing with crime prevention, safe and affordable housing and employment and training initiatives.

**We look forward to learning about these projects in the coming year.**

### **Summary of the report from the NCWC DO Board:**

A new brochure is being developed. The executive was asked to investigate the possibility of having the brochure/information/communication about the NCWCDO available in both official languages.

Application forms are being revised. Calls for applying for project funding will be out in September.

The Board suggested having a grants awards committee to review the applications prior to sending to the Councils and Board of Directors for their recommendations.

Each local council is invited to name a person to be the DO contact (provincial representatives on the Board are the contacts for the provincial councils).

Please send information, pictures, reports and any other materials (both current and archival) about the DO to the NCWC office.

NOTE: Does anyone know where the "scrapbook" about the DO has gone??

Ideas for fundraising are welcome and councils are encouraged to hold events to both promote the DO and raise funds.

A sincere thank you to the many individual members and councils for their generous response to requests for donations this past year. The financial assistance provided enables women in developing countries as well as in communities in Canada to help realize their goals.

**All donations over \$10.00 are tax deductible. Donors giving \$50.00 or more are acknowledged in the DO Annual Report.**

**Deadline for grant applications to be received is January 15, 2008**

For more information, to make a donation or obtain applications for project grants contact:

**NCWC DO c/o NCWC Office  
205 - 251 Bank Street, Ottawa, ON K2P 1X3  
Phone: (613) 232-5025 Toll-free (877) 319-0993  
Fax: (613) 232-8419 Email: [ncwc@magma.ca](mailto:ncwc@magma.ca)**

\* Registered Charitable No. 888285046 RR0001

## NCWC statement in support of NAWL

*By Karen Dempsey, President NCWC*

### **In Support of the National Association of Women and the Law (NAWL) and all equality-seeking organizations**

After signing onto CEDAW during the last election, the Prime Minister has reneged on this commitment and abrogated his responsibilities to women and to gender equality. Results of all the major cuts and changes that were made last fall to Status of Women Canada and to other major programs and initiatives have impacted severely on women.

The National Association of Women and the Law is one of the groups which has had their funding cut. NAWL's work, which has focused on researching legislation to promote equality for Canadian women, has been instrumental in achieving the major strides to equality made for women ever since NAWL was founded. Their expertise and knowledge has assisted governments in Canada in the implementation of the Articles of the UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

What this government terms "women's issues" are really part of a much larger dynamic that impacts on everyone and the country as a whole. That is what this government must learn.

No matter how severe the cuts, equality-seeking women will not retreat into a feminist ghetto never to be heard from again. That is what this government needs to understand.

## Azerbaijani Women's Support Centre supported AzCan TV to launch its production

*By Nazila Isgandarova*

Under the contract between the Federation of Canadian Azerbaijani Associations and Rogers TV, AzCan TV will be airing its production half an hour per week as of September 2007. The channel hopes to establish a bridge between Canada and Azerbaijan by appealing to the existing Azerbaijani population in Canada.

In anticipation of start up challenges and preparation for a successful launch, the Federation asked the help of Azerbaijani Women's Support Centre. The Centre has been of tremendous help to the volunteer staff of AzCan TV by offering guidance and direction in many aspects for production and post-production.

Azerbaijani Women's Support Centre will also help the AzCan TV producer to raise very important gender problems of the community and introduce the well-known women of the community.

The time slot of AzCan TV will be as follows: Saturdays, 1:30 PM and repeat time slots Fridays, 6:30 PM.

## MCW members attend Gourmet Tea in aid of NCWCDO

It was a sunny, warm and lazy afternoon in June, when members and friends of MCW and CPFQ-PCWQ gathered in Bonnie Lee Smith's home to enjoy delicious desserts, while sipping tea or coffee and enjoying each other's company. Lively conversations, permeated by deafening peals of laughter, could have been heard blocks away! All present were being pampered and how they loved it!!

Each attendee knew the importance of her presence - over and above the obvious pleasure of the afternoon and the epicurean delights.

It was a chance to give (little or much, whatever one's purse could bear) to assist women (in Canada and abroad) in their struggles to make a better life for themselves, their families and their communities. Women Helping Women to make the world a better place! The two Councils raised a grand total of \$340 to send to NCWCDO for next year's projects. Many thanks to NCWC V-P Bonnie Lee Smith for her most enjoyable initiative.

Hostess B.L.Smith serves Tea, Coffee and "Delicious Pastries" to Montreal Council of Women Members and Friends.



# NCWCEF News

By Margaret MacGee

## Independent Woman IV London and Area Council of Women By Margaret MacGee

On May 2<sup>nd</sup> 2007, the London and Area Council of Women (L&ACW) held "Independent Woman IV" a very successful 4<sup>th</sup> roundtable / workshop as part of "Securing Our Future" a NCWC national project first activated in 2001.

**Purpose:** *to help young women recognize that they themselves are responsible for their own secure economic future in old age, and that they must begin measures, however small, while they are young. They must not depend on a husband or partner or the government for that financial security.*

In order to determine if another Independent Woman Workshop was warranted, L&ACW, in January '07, held an active discussion meeting on the "Poverty of Older Women 2007" using "Aging in Poverty in Canada (2004-05) and "Seniors in Poverty in Canada 2006 Report Card" published by the National Advisory Council on Aging (an organization closed by the Conservative government). We also used the same questions developed for the think tanks of the original NCWC project in our discussion meeting. It was clearly indicated another Independent Woman Workshop was needed.

An organizing committee was established under the leadership of Barbara Robinson (Girl Guides) and Lynn Savory (United Church Women). L&ACW felt they had sufficient funds left in a legacy from Jane Struthers to finance the 2007 roundtable/workshop (\$2,000). As this was the 4<sup>th</sup> Independent Woman event to be held, planning was straightforward. Having an established track record meant that our proposal was well received by both public and separate school boards.

As Independent Woman III had been held in a public secondary school, space was sought in the separate school system for the IV event. We secured space in a boardroom of the Catholic Education Centre in London South. The advantage of this set up was being covered under the school board's student insurance policy. As in the past the registration forms included a permission slip signed by the student, guardian and principal allowing students to be absent from class on a school day.

Using email we worked through the heads of Guidance at each secondary school. As well, an information package plus posters was sent by post, attention to the School Principals and heads of Guidance at each secondary school as a back up assurance.

Building on past experience we found a fantastic woman, Veronica Stasiuk from Freedom 55, a mother herself of a teenage daughter, to present financial planning to our young women in a manner that was fun as well as educational. Her firm was indispensable in assisting with her presentation. The participants received a copy of "Focus on Your Finances: A Financial Planning Tool for Canadians aged 15 - 25".

We hope that the NCWC Education Fund will be able to provide a tool kit in the future for this type of financial training.

The program consisted of Guest Speaker Nicole Arroyas, Executive Chef Auberge du Petit Prince Restaurant, followed by a session on financial planning; greetings from the Mayor and local MPs and MPPs; the Money Trivia Game; a break for lunch; a short presentation on the Council of Women; and roundtable sessions exploring the barriers and possible solutions to financial self sufficiency.

The participants again told us that financial planning was not part of the school curriculum and limited in courses such as family studies taken by a small number of students.

We hope this article will spark interest for other Councils. This work has not only been beneficial to the participants but has raised the Council's profile within the community. Assistance with development of a similar project is available from Lynn Savory and Barbara Robinson.

## I N M E M O R I A M

### Florence Ruth Hinkley (1920-2007)

Past President NCWC

It has been said that Ruth was "ahead of the times" serving in her younger years in offices usually held by men. She was the first woman accountant in the Canadian Division of Smith, Kline & French International Division in Montreal, and following her husband's transfer to Ottawa she was an Accounting Supervisor with the National Defence Research Board.

Throughout her life (following in her mother's footsteps) Ruth was involved in Anglican Church activities, holding office at the parish, deanery, diocesan and national level. She served on the ACW Finance Committee, the Task Force on the Rights of Indian Women and was a Canadian representative to the Canterbury, England conference in 1986 "Women in the Anglican Communion" in support of the ordination of women.

Ruth was a member and officer of the Ottawa Council of Women and of PCWO, and she served a term as president of NCWC and



as vice-president of ICW. In 1976-1979 she was involved in the formation of the Regional Council of the Americas and was a founding member and signatory to the charter of the NCWC Development Organization and of MATCH International. In the 1970s and 1980s she served on the boards or committees of innumerable voluntary organizations where her financial expertise proved very valuable. After retirement in 1985 to Wilmot Creek, Ontario she took an active part in the home owners' association and was honoured by the naming of a street in Wilmot Creek as Hinkley Trail.

Ruth believed in a society where the rights, well-being and personal worth of older persons was respected, promoted and utilized. Through the years she received many citations and awards, including the Queen's Silver and Golden Jubilee Medals.

*Excerpted from her obituary notice*



Front row (L-R): Monica Singh, Donna Blight, Beverley Goodwin, and Karen Ohlson (representing Manitoba Child Care Association)  
 Back row (L-R): Barbara Kendel, Elizabeth Fleming, Shirley Walker, Kim Legary (representing Manitoba Dental Hygienists Association)

## Celebrating Women Gala Fundraiser - a success story!

*By Arlene Draffin Jones, Chair Celebrating Women Gala and Fundraiser*

The final results are in and the First Annual *Celebrating Women* Gala Fundraiser hosted by the Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba has been a resounding success. The celebration was held in the beautiful setting of the Assiniboine Park Conservatory on July 11, 2007. Over 150 persons enjoyed an evening of music, good food, fellowship and the opportunity to acknowledge the work and dedication of six individual council women and two federates who have made a positive difference in their community. The honourees were presented with certificates and beautiful engraved glass vases.

Generous corporate sponsorship, individual contributions, a Rainbow Auction and the Celebrating

Women suitcase sale items were the major fundraising initiatives for the event. None of this would have been possible without the efforts of a special "Celebrating Women" committee who planned and organized the Gala. We received excellent media coverage both prior and at the event.

Monies raised will go toward funding programs to improve the quality of life for women, their families and their community. These include presentations on mental health issues, poverty, immigration, energy and resources.

The Gala promises to become an annual event for the PCWM.

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# Letters From the President

## RE Number of Women in Cabinet

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

On behalf of The National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC), I am writing to urge you to follow the example of the Hon. Jean Charest, Premier of Quebec, who has formed a Cabinet made up equally of men and women.

In fact, this is a CEDAW commitment that to date only Quebec has realized, complying with Article 2 (a) of the Convention. This is a Treaty obligation which all levels of government in Canada should be implementing. NCWC regrets that most levels of government have taken so long to even begin to take this obligation seriously.

Even though Canada's population is approximately 52 percent women, women continue to be under-represented in government and under-represented in Cabinet. NCWC has already clearly expressed approval of the appointments to the Supreme Court which have brought it as close to equal representation as possible.

We shall continue to urge all levels of government to strive toward more equality in government and uphold their commitment to CEDAW.

Sincerely,  
Karen Dempsey  
President NCWC

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## Re: Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP)

Dear Prime Minister:

We, The National Council of Women of Canada, wish to address major concerns we have with the Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP) that Canada is evolving with the U.S. and Mexico.

We are extremely concerned with the seemingly secretive nature of the SPP. When Gordon Laxer, a professor at the University of Alberta's Parkland Institute, came as a witness to the Standing Committee for International Trade in May 2007 and began to speak about how NAFTA and SPP were affecting Canada's own energy security, Committee Chair Leon Benoit left the committee room. However, the hearings continued with Vice Chair, Liberal Lui Temelkovski, albeit unofficially. While this might have resulted in no official record, the committee met later and voted 6 to 4 to put the hearing on the record. Mr. Laxer's testimony would otherwise have been lost.

Mr. Laxer's testimony is of the utmost importance if Canada is to have energy security and deal effectively with climate change. Mr. Laxer is quoted as saying: "Canada now exports 63 percent of our oil and 56 percent of our natural gas production .... [while] we import about 40 percent of our oil to meet 90 percent of Atlantic Canada's and Quebec's needs, and 40 percent of Ontario's."

Dorval Brunelle, professor of sociology at the Université du Québec à Montréal, has said that "ultimately, the SPP aims to create a common defence policy which will place Canada, the U.S., and Mexico under a single military command, undermining sovereignty."

It has been alleged that corporations, in conjunction with the American Congress, are implementing policies without the knowledge of Mexican and Canadian legislators. John Foster, principal researcher at the North-South Institute in Ottawa, said "that executives from the corporations advise the governments of Canada, the U.S., and Mexico on priorities and have access to top politicians that 'none of us has.'" He also stated that we must not allow corporations to set the agenda for democracies. Hassan Yusseff of the Canadian Labour Congress states that the SPP puts Canadian interests below U.S. economic interests.

When corporations and other legislators are alleged to be "calling the shots," the issue arises of whether or not Canadian sovereignty is being compromised. When the SPP is conducting its business under the radar of the average Canadian and without the sanction of Parliament, we believe there is no question that our sovereignty is being challenged.

When this is being done by our "new government" (contrary to its long-standing call for and repeated commitment to "transparency" in all actions), we indeed need to be convinced that if this is in Canada's best interests, it should be debated and decided by our Parliament, not the U.S. Congress.

There was a unanimous recommendation at our recent AGM to address our concerns to you, Prime Minister. The issues we speak to are long-standing NCWC policies:

- That Canadian political sovereignty is retained (88.17E).
- That Canada sign only those agreements that guarantee Canadian ownership and control of vital natural resources (98.6).
- That the Government of Canada 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 (91.15EM).
- That the Government of Canada retain and promote an active, independent and strong regulatory role in the protection of the environment (97.4).
- That the Government of Canada respect the economic, political and constitutional sovereignty of Canada ..... and guarantee Canadian ownership and control over the delivery of vital natural resources, such as water, electricity and natural gas; and guarantee compliance with Canadian environmental standards (98.6).

It is not enough to state on the SPP website that it "[respects] the sovereignty and unique heritage, culture and laws of each country." All SPP discussions must be brought into the legislative and public domains immediately.

Sincerely,  
Karen Dempsey,  
President NCWC

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See more Letters From the President on Page 4



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

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

**Total:**

**Comments and Suggestions:**


**Address:**


*Looking to the Future*



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