



PCWO Trillium

Provincial Council of Women of Ontario

... working together since 1923 ...

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NEWSLETTER

February 2017

President's Report

Our Newsletter Editor, Thelma McGillivray has been very sick recently, and not able to work on the newsletter, so this newsletter is a compilation of reports from the PCWO Teleconference on February 7, 2017.

Since our Semi-Annual Meeting in November we have been pleased to welcome another Individual Member – Sara Kanagasabai. We welcomed Ann Porter Bonilla at the Semi-Annual Meeting and she has subsequently taken over managing the website.

Correspondence

1. We received a letter from Glen Murray, Minister of the Environment and Climate Change after the Semi-Annual with apologies for not coming to our meeting because he was at a U.N. Climate Change Conference in Morocco. He said that the nuclear power concerns were under federal jurisdiction. Re incineration he assured us that Ontario's priority is the 3Rs. He drew our attention to the new legislation passed – the Waste Free Ontario Act – that will reduce the waste going for disposal and increase producer responsibility for the end-of-life management of their products. He says that the government is deeply committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

2. I signed a letter of support written by the Business and Professional Women of Ontario about a project of theirs to develop action plans to address gender prosperity gaps in our communities. They would like us to invite the membership of PCWO to participate in community engagement sessions to develop action plans to address gender prosperity gaps in our communities, to review project reports and provide further insights on how barriers can be overcome and actions that would work in our communities.

3. We signed onto a letter to the Prime Minister in support of a comprehensive ban on asbestos in Canada and a proposal to establish an Expert Panel to review Asbestos Management Regime in Canada. The letter was written by the Canadian Association of University Teachers and the Canadian Environmental Law Association.

4. We signed onto another letter from the Canadian Environmental Law Association to the Federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change and the Federal Minister of Health re “Initial response to Notice of Intention to Develop Regulations respecting Asbestos”. The letter commented on the manufacture, use, sale, offer for sale, import and export of asbestos as published in the Canadian Gazette.

5. I sent a letter to the Advisory Board for Senate Appointments supporting Emanuela Heynincks’s appointment to the Senate. She is the Ontario Pay Equity Commissioner.

6. I have accepted an invitation from the Federated Women’s Institutes of Ontario to attend Tea at the Erland Lee Museum on Feb. 19 in honour of the 120th Anniversary of the Women’s Institute.

Briefs and Presentations

1. Gracia submitted a brief to the Provincial Government on the Provincial Long Term Energy Plan.

2. Beverlee made a presentation to the Provincial Minister of Finance in Pre-Budget Consultations.

~Mary Potter

ECONOMICS REPORT

I have continued my ongoing work supporting closing the gender wage gap, working with the Equal Pay Coalition and communicating information about women’s economic empowerment. I would like to announce that Equal Pay Day in Ontario will be on April 11, 2017. For more information please visit the Equal Pay Coalition website at <http://equalpaycoalition.org/> or the Business and Professional Women of Ontario website at <http://bpwontario.com/>

The Minister of Finance has extended the pre-budget consultation process until February 15, 2017. I had planned to attend the in-person consultation in London on January 27, but was forced to cancel due to illness. I have prepared a draft submission.

~Linda Davis, VP Economics

ENVIRONMENT REPORT

As per the President’s report, I requested that PCWO sign onto a letter to the Prime Minister in support of a comprehensive ban on asbestos in Canada and a proposal to establish an Expert Panel to review Asbestos Management Regime in Canada. The letter was written by the Canadian Association of University Teachers and the Canadian Environmental Law Association. I also alerted President Karen Dempsey for the National Council of Women of Canada. (NCWC) and Elizabeth Hutchinson, President of the Quebec Provincial Council of Women who signed on, as all three Councils of Women have very strong policy on the dangers of asbestos.

Similarly, I requested that PCWO and NCWC sign onto another letter from the Canadian Environmental Law Association to the Federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change and the Federal Minister of Health re “Initial response to Notice of Intention to Develop Regulations respecting Asbestos”. The letter commented on the manufacture, use, sale, offer for sale, import and export of asbestos as published in the Canadian Gazette.

Attached is our PCWO submission regarding the Province’s 20-year energy plan, and here is the conclusion.

“Conclusion

To conclude PCWO urges the Ministry of Energy to pay close attention to the public’s desire for a sustainable electricity system that protects the health, safety, and environment of all Ontarians. This should be one that is not weighted in favour of nuclear power because of such factors as:

- lack of a requirement for an environmental assessment, or even an Ontario Energy Board hearing
- the excuse that the federal government will look after all nuclear processes, when in fact Ontario owns all nuclear operations and Ontarians pay for nuclear waste disposal and help finance NWMO
- avoidance of the 2013’s Ministerial “Conservation First” policy
- praise of nuclear attributes such as jobs, while ignoring jobs created by renewables and energy conservation and efficiencies
- a failure to take into consideration other important ways Ontario’s Climate Action Plan can meet its carbon reduction and avoidance targets, other than through continued and increased reliance on very dangerous, risky, enormously expensive nuclear power

Instead, PCWO reiterates that the 2017 LTEP should plan for renewables, and optimize energy conservation, newly emerging technologies, energy efficiencies, and community involvement in energy-saving planning that enhances the Climate Change Action Plan goals, while modernizing the grid and updating the building code.

All of these plans and investments will build a flexible, ‘climate change’-friendly, environmentally protective and sustainable Ontario system appropriate for the next 20 years and on.”

~Gracia Janes, VP Environment

HEALTH

I participated at the local level in the Provincial Finance Minister’s request for input into the Ontario budget. I spoke to concerns about the cycle of the CCAC budget (previous policy) which is on a yearly basis while hospital budgets are on a 3-year cycle.

I collected 40 signatures for the Long Term Care Family Council of Ontario Network which is trying to increase the minimum number of per capita hours of care for residents of LTC.

I have submitted a resolution to PCWO on the issue of building more LTC facilities in Ontario to meet the upcoming need in the Ontario population.

~Beverlee McIntosh, VP Health

HOUSING AND LAND USE

Affordable Housing, Homelessness, Poverty: all, of course, are closely connected in all our provincial communities. Many traditional social safety nets are stretched to their limits: the churches & other religious institutions, the food banks, shelters & counselling services to support those desperately needing them, but having long lineups & waiting lists. Added to the usual urgent needs, bitterly cold weather in Ontario & across most of Canada, all this season since November & probably through March & April, this winter will see more severe illnesses & deaths in the homeless populations. This

required more emergency housing and shelters to open in community centres, libraries, arenas & religious institutions, preventing many regular (but not as urgent) programmes to take place. (I've helped at several of these in Ottawa & Vancouver since Oct. this season).

The affordable housing shortage will be easing somewhat in Ontario with the implementation of several recently approved social housing complexes in London, Toronto, Kingston, Ottawa, Sudbury & Thunder Bay. North Bay, Cornwall & the Niagara Region are also increasing their affordable, accessible housing stocks. In Ottawa, after 2 years in abeyance, the Council on Aging has reorganized its Housing Committee having meetings to move forward on specific recommendations of the National Housing Strategy (a re-emergence of a CMHC support for Social/ Affordable/ Accessible Housing?)

There's an increasing impact on social housing of a continually growing senior population in Ontario, by the benefit of our good health care system, our increasing immigrant family reunification programme, & our increasing refugee population. Various new housing options are being implemented such as: coach houses on back properties or laneways, for other family members or for those wanting small independent homes. Co-housing of several types is also being developed in some communities.

The Ontario Seniors' Secretariat was advocating for these & other seniors' issues, but the Minister of Families, Children, & Social Development combines many portfolios these days.

We've sent several relevant resolutions & letters to the Ontario Government in the past; hopefully the N.H.S. soon enables more appropriate housing developments in Ontario.

~Sheila Pepper, VP Housing & Land Use

SENIORS ISSUES

The massive removal of groundwater by bottling companies has been a concern for some time. Fortunately, the government of Ontario will update and improve the regulations surrounding the issuing and renewal of permits for water removal. The permits will depend on the status of the groundwater supply and demands on it in the region in question.

A little closer to seniors' issues, health care is slowly shifting to a patient-centered model. The best explanation of this model I can find is that the aim is to treat the patient and not just the disease. The patient and family/caregivers would participate in decisions about care, and the primary care physician would be involved at all stages. This should do away with fragmentation of care.

For the elderly, hospitalization often results in loss of strength and depression. To prevent this some hospitals are doing simple things like having many patients eat their meals in a chair rather than in bed and encouraging those who can to go for walks and interact with others.

The decision of the Government to limit the number of long term care beds could have serious negative consequences. Home care is not equipped to take up the slack without significant changes. Perhaps those who make such decisions are counting on a cure for dementia, or maybe relying on medically assisted death to solve access issues.

~Luba Podolsky, VP Seniors Issues

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

I have been following the current discussions around Ontario's Basic Income Guarantee planned pilot project, and attended one meeting in the summer here in Niagara; missed one meeting in Niagara Falls in January due to weather; and plan to attend a meeting in Welland in late February. Below are the notes from a meeting held in Hamilton this fall hosted by Peter Clutterbuck, Senior Planning consultant of the Social Planning Network of Ontario. Over 90 people attended, and all were very cognizant of the need to carry on, regardless of the unfolding of a Basic Income Guarantee (BIG) program (which will probably be over at least 3 years, and then research on results collected and examined etc.), strong efforts to persuade the government to raise the social assistance rates, which are still lower than in 1992 before the Harris 21.6% cuts; ensure a living wage; reduce the stigma associated with living in poverty; extend such assistance as dental care to individuals, etc.

"November 22, 2016

Basic Income Principles for Income Security Policy

It is imperative that income security and all social welfare policy in Canada be grounded in the conviction that it is a shared public responsibility to provide the conditions and supports for all Canadians and residents in our land ***to live in health and dignity as a matter of fundamental human rights*** and that strategies, policies and programs that fulfill these rights should be ***developed and implemented in accordance with the social determinants of health.***

Livable Incomes.

Everyone needs sufficient income to meet the basic necessities of living in health and dignity in the community.

Non-conditionality.

Public income support must be provided to individuals and families living below the poverty line without other eligibility requirements or conditions related to its use.

Non-Replacement.

Basic income payments must not replace, disrupt, or limit access to other essential health and social service benefits and supports, which people on low incomes need to survive and thrive in community.

Augmenting Education and Employment Supports.

Individuals receiving a Basic Income must be able to access additional supports to develop and advance their talents and skills through education, employment and other pursuits driven by their own personal initiative.

Sustaining Employment.

A Basic Income program must complement, not supplant, a public policy commitment to the creation of good jobs for all, including opportunities for decent work in the community and civic sector.

Wage Protection and Enhancement.

Implementation of a Basic Income must have no bearing on the need for an adequate legislated minimum wage that ensures an individual working full-year, full-time escapes poverty nor should it discourage all employers from paying a living wage to their workers based on the cost in their areas for individuals and families to sustain themselves and fully participate in community life.

Gender Sensitive.

Basic Income policies and programs must not indirectly result in compelling women in the household to assume the full burden of caregiving roles for children, elderly or other family members.

Ethical Research Practices.

Basic Income recipients or participants in a Basic Income pilot must have their privacy protected; no individual or family should be worse off during or after participating in a pilot study.

“Combating poverty, deprivation and exclusion is not a matter of charity, and it does not depend on how rich a country is. By tackling poverty as a matter of human rights obligations, the world will have a better chance of abolishing this scourge in our lifetime. Poverty eradication is an achievable goal.”

(Louise Arbour, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights)

“Like slavery and apartheid, poverty is not natural. It is man-made and it can be overcome and eradicated by the actions of human beings. And overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity. It is an act of justice. It is the protection of a fundamental human right, the right to dignity and a decent life.”

(Nelson Mandela)

“Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself (herself) and of his (her) family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his (her) control.”

(Article 25, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948)

~Gracia Janes, VP Social Development

WEBSITE

On January 3, 2017, I took over the responsibility of website editor for the PCWO web site from Beverlee McIntosh.

1. On January 3rd, Beverlee forwarded the website editor's email to me.
2. I discovered that our domain name, pcwocanada.org, is not registered under the ownership of the PCWO. I have been in contact with the people in Ottawa who have it registered in their name and they have agreed to transfer it to the PCWO. I feel that it's important for the PCWO to be the registered owner of our domain name. I will continue to follow up on this until the transfer is completed. The registration would be in the name of the current president of the PCWO and can be changed as needed while the PCWO's g-mail address remains the same.
3. In January, I had a telephone meeting with Michelle Weger of Outclassed, the web developer in Ottawa who has set up the site and is under a retainer contract with PCWO. She clarified some of my questions about the website's set up.
4. With Mary Potter's input, I reorganized the website's Photo Gallery and added captions to the photos.

5. This website is partially set up like a Blog and any item posted under Newsletters & Documents has a section at the bottom to “Submit a Comment”. I do not feel that this is needed and would like to have the Submit a Comment section removed. I feel that comments or inquiries should be sent by email to the PCWO’s g-mail address which is listed at the top of each page and is managed by the President.
~Ann Porter Bonilla, Web Editor

PCWO ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Our Annual Meeting will be held on April 22 and 23, 2017 at the Monte Carlo Inn Oakville Suites. There is a Board Meeting on Friday afternoon, April 21.

We have a meeting package on the Saturday which includes a continental breakfast. You are on your own for Sunday breakfast and we meet only until noon on the Sunday.

This year – 2017- is the 100th Anniversary of the Suffragette Movement and we will be having a film on the suffragette movement on Saturday morning. The resolutions discussion will be on Saturday afternoon, and we are hoping for a speaker on a “light” topic for our banquet on Saturday evening.

Please remember to bring something for the auction sale on Saturday afternoon.

Registration forms will be out soon!

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