

Annual Report

2005 – 2006

Highlights - The Year Under Review

The past year has been one of building our membership base, advocating to the provincial government our position on a range of policy issues, reaching out to the broader community to build networks and coalitions on common concerns and educating our members and the broader community on a variety of topics. A sincere thank you to the members and Federates who have supported the work of Council.

There were a number of joint initiatives with the Council of Women of Winnipeg – the major one being the very successful ***Celebrating Women Art Project***, which raised funds for both Councils, as well as our public profile. We also worked with the local Council to hold two very popular town halls, one for a provincial by-election (Fort Whyte) in December, and the other an All Candidates Forum for Winnipeg South Centre, in January, during the recent Federal election.

The membership for Provincial Council increased by 12 new Federates and our membership now stands at 28 Federates plus 36 individual members. A successful Round Table, with a focus on the Federates was held in February, and identified the issues and priorities of our members. Our Semi Annual meeting held in November had the theme of Gender Based Analysis – *“Gender Based Analysis: Counting Women In!”*. A complete report on the Semi Annual Meeting, and the Round Table is available from pcwm@mts.net.

The Brief to the Government of Manitoba was presented in September, and although the premier was not present, 15 members of the NDP Caucus attended, including several ministers. There were 24 members of PCWM supporting the presentation of the Brief. We also presented the same Brief to the Conservative Caucus, and a policy committee of the Liberal Party of Manitoba. The Brief focused on:

- Improved access to government information through more routine disclosure and progressive amendments to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act;
- Reduced Government dependency on gambling revenues, greater transparency and accountability regarding gambling revenues, and the establishment of an all-party, expert working group to hold public hearings to examine the social and economic costs of gambling and to make recommendations;
- Sustainable land use and land use planning through clear provincial leadership, meaningful consultation with Winnipeggers on Plan Winnipeg and informed consultation with Winnipeggers in Winnipeg region decisions;
- Under "Health" - self-regulation of Dental Hygienists; increased community supports for mental health, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder, HIV/AIDs, and problem solving approaches to the language and accreditation barriers in the health care system;
- Human rights for all Canadians, including aboriginal women;
- Government action to reduce poverty and an increase to the Manitoba minimum wage to a wage that covers the necessities of daily living;
- Routine and systematic, gender-based analysis of government policy and budgets.

In addition, Briefs were presented to Manitoba Employment Standards Review, and a Brief in support of the Manitoba Dental Hygienist Act (which was later proclaimed).

There were 8 Board meetings, three general meetings, during the year, plus the Semi Annual Meeting, a Round Table for Federates, and the Annual Meeting. The September

29th General Meeting featured Irene Hamilton, B.A., L.L.B. (Manitoba's Ombudsman) speaking on *Why A Government Watchdog: One Woman's View*. The October 27th General Meeting featured a Panel, chaired by Marilyn McGonigal on the report by the Manitoba Low Wage Community Inquiry. Both Fall general meetings included a short presentation by Federates on their current work. The March General Meeting, chaired by Arlene Jones and Muriel Smith, provided an opportunity to discuss and vote on the NCWC resolutions.

The theme for our AGM, to be held in Gimli, Manitoba, May 13th, 2006, is "*Water, Water Everywhere, But Not a Drop to Drink?*" We are delighted Gracia Janes, NCWC VP, will be joining us and will be a member of the panel.

This year two new special committees were formed. The **Poverty Committee** under the leadership of Marilyn McGonigal is following up on the report "**Paid to be Poor**" and the work of the Manitoba Low Wage Community Inquiry, as well as the many related issues affecting the poor in this province. Beverley Goodwin is chairing a committee on **Mental Health**, and the committee is working on the preparation of a report highlighting the challenges (and possible solutions) individuals, and families are facing around mental health. Our thanks to Elizabeth Fleming and the work of the **Rural/Urban Issues** Committee and their continuing commitment to supporting sustainable principles of development for Winnipeg, and Manitoba.

PCWM continues to be an active member of the community by participating as a member of the Just Income Coalition; the Gender Based Budget Coalition; the Rural Team (Joint Federal/Provincial); the Round Table Discussion and Resource Sharing on Violence Prevention - Programs and Services for Girls and Young Women; and the Voluntary and Non Profit Sector Organization of Manitoba. Particular thanks to Leonore Saunders for her participation at the Manitoba Water Caucus (a working committee of the Manitoba Eco Network) – Leonore has represented PCWM well at this forum over the years. Bonni Book has joined Leonore this year at the Water Caucus meetings.

One Resolution (*Reduction of Social & Economic Inequity as part of Healthy Living Strategy*) was approved at the Semi Annual meeting, with the final version to come forward to the AGM, and two further Resolutions will be presented at the AGM: *Reducing Driving to Meet Kyoto Protocol Targets* and *Pay as You Drive Insurance*.

During the year, many committee, community and Federate meetings were held that the President attended, in addition to the 8 Board and 6 membership meetings. Some of these were:

- May 2005: "*Follow the Money*" Training; Life Members of CWW and PCWM luncheon; "Yes She Can" Award dinner hosted by Balmoral Hall School; Celebrating 20/20 Equality at the Women's Enterprise Centre
- June: NCWC Annual Meeting in Montreal June 2 – June 5; Spoke to *Leadership Winnipeg* students; attended the *Keeping the Fires Burning* Dinner.
- July: *Celebrating Women* Art Display at the Assiniboine Park July 7th to August 2nd.
- August: Attended Equity Committee meeting sponsored by Manitoba Hydro in preparation to the construction of the new Manitoba Hydro building.
- September: Presentation of the PCWM Brief; Interviewed 4 students and selected Aldora Neto to support PCWM; Joint CWW/PCWM resolutions meeting.

- October: Women's History Month event at the Leg.; Gender Budget Coalition meeting; LEAF Breakfast; Breakfast in the Round (Food Security); Manitoba Association of Women's Shelters AGM; World Social Forum event at the Forks;
- November: Poverty Reduction in Manitoba planning meeting; CCPA Release "*State of the Inner City Report*"; Birthing Centre consultation; Poverty Committee meeting.
- December: Town Hall provincial by-election jointly sponsored by CWW/PCWM; Gender Budget Coalition; Waverley West consultation
- January: Winnipeg South Centre All Candidates Forum, jointly sponsored by CWW/PCWM; CWW General Meeting; Joint Resolutions Committee; meeting with Lenore Besheid (honourary patroness PCWM); Presented to Legislative committee regarding self regulation of Manitoba Dental Hygienists; opening of transition centre at MORN; Women's Committee from the Rural Team; 2 days of Gender Based Analysis training; meeting coordinated by Elizabeth Fry regarding the closure of Headingley Jail; Round Table coordinated by Manitoba Women's Advisory Council on Violence Prevention: Programs and Services for Girls and Young Women
- February: Birthing Centre meeting; CWW General Meeting; Launch of Alternative Budget, with CCPA and UNPAC; Mental Health Committee Meeting
- March: Provincial Budget Lock-up; International Women's Day Event at the Leg – PCWM had a display; Meeting with Manitoba Association of Women's Shelters; Spoke at Red River College International Women's Day event;
- April: Attended the series of "Women's Lives" lectures at the University Women's Club of Winnipeg; Poverty Committee; CWW Annual Meeting; Joint CWW/PCWM Archives Committee; Town Hall on Vision for Winnipeg; Spoke on a panel "Does Manitoba Need a Child's Bill of Rights?"; Attended Riel Community Committee Meeting – topic Waverley West; Meeting with YMCA-YWCA regarding possible funding support for PCWM/CWW Archives; Breakfast sponsored by Laurel Centre with Craig Kielburger; Board meeting -Voluntary and Non Profit Sector Organizations of Manitoba.

At last year's AGM, I stated that a priority for me would be to look at the administration structures at the office. This has been done to the extent possible, given current resources. There is now a mail log; a correspondence binder; a sign-up for office keys; a check-list for general meetings; guidelines for administrative functions and a listing of all files, and publications on the shelves. A Records Management Committee has been formed. PCWM is basically maintained by volunteers, and it is important that the work get done in an effective and efficient manner.

Of special note this year has been the award by the Margaret Laurence Endowment in Women's Studies. This award has allowed us to retain the services of an excellent student, **Aldora Neto** who worked extremely hard on a number of initiatives, namely our semi annual meeting, the Round Table for Federates and members, and the recording of the files and publication in the office for a file listing. This was an incredible support for Provincial Council and we appreciate Aldora's work, and the financial award that made it possible. We also were fortunate to have the volunteer help, as part of her practicum, from **Karen Sharma**. It is Karen that has coordinated much of the promotion and registration work of the AGM. Thank you very much Aldora and Karen. Partly as a result of this experience, the Board is recommending to Nominating that we have a youth representative on the PCWM Board.

So many thanks are due to so many people – to Her Honour, **Ms. Lenore Bersheid** and our Patroness, for your support and your work on behalf of children; **Arlene Draffin-Jones** for her continuing enthusiasm and willingness to take on the little jobs, and the big ones too; to **Elizabeth Fleming** for her thoughtful approach, and thorough research; to **Marilyn McGonigal** for her honesty and way with words that captures the mind and the heart; to **Sandi McKnight** who in spite of many challenges, always comes thru with excellent newsletters, and this Annual Report; to **Muriel Smith** for her wisdom and help, especially with Resolutions; to **Shirley Walker**, who kept an eagle eye on our expenses this year, and encouraged fund raising; to **Laurie Helgason** who supported the Board for most of the year as recording secretary – we wish her well as the Co Chair for the City of Winnipeg’s Equity Committee; to **Sharon Scharfe** who, although a recent member of PCWM, made a major contribution, especially coordinating our response regarding justice issues and women; to **Rosalie Harms** who was such an asset with the planning and running of the Round Table for Federates; to **Sharon Taylor**, who brings the perspective from grass roots women we don’t always consider, co chaired the Resolutions Committee, and provided space for PCWM at Wolseley Family Place; to **Peggy Barker**, who graciously filled in where needed; to **Beverley Goodwin** for her leadership with organizing the Mental Health Committee and the contribution she continues to make as a spokesperson on this issue; to **Babs Friesen and Donna Mae Yeo**, two remarkable women, for their hard work over the years with preserving Council history; to **Barb Kendel** for her organizational skills and work with building our membership; to **Dr. Mary Pankiw, Sally Thomas and Pat Powell** for sharing the Council work and representing the Council of Women of Winnipeg; to **Leonore Saunders** for continuing to represent us so well at the Water Caucus; and to **June Menzies** for the support and work of the Life Members.

I would like to say a special thank you to the **Manitoba Women’s Advisory Council**. Thank you very much to the Minister, Nancy Allan, and to the past Chair, Crystal Labarero. The support that you give to the community is very much appreciated. Thanks too, to Sue Barnsley, the Executive Director – what a pleasure it is to work with you, and to Gerri Thorsteinsen, and Lynda Saelens – great support with our copying and mailing needs. Thank you from all of us at Provincial Council.

Special thanks to **Balmoral Hall School**, who are a wonderful to us in providing space at very reasonable cost, and in particular Carla Pelletier Gray, the Business Manager, who is responsive to our needs.

Finally, **thank you to all our Federates and individual members** for your work that you do to make a difference in this province – let us continue to bring our voices together through the Provincial Council.

Mary Scott
President