



BPW Connections – Coast to Coast Connexions BPW – d'un océan à l'autre

The Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs
La Fédération Canadienne des Clubs de Femmes de Carrières Commerciales et Professionnelles

BPW Canada National Newsletter – Volume 2, Issue 2, Spring 2007
Editor: Julie McSorley

From the President's desk...

Regional Conference: Appointment of Doris Hall

At the recent Regional Conference, an election was held for the new position of sub-regional coordinator for the countries of the Caribbean. BPW Canada then introduced a motion that the remainder of the region (i.e., Canada, the US and Bermuda) should also constitute a sub-region and be represented by a coordinator.

As a result, I am pleased to announce that BPW Canada 1st Vice President Doris Hall of the London club has been appointed as our first Sub-Regional Coordinator. Doris's role will be to assist Regional Coordinator Monica McNeill of Jamaica until the completion of her term (October 2008). Moreover, Doris will provide an important connection to the BPW International Board of Directors. I congratulate Doris on her appointment, and I thank her for allowing me to put her name forward.

Regional Conference: Constitutional Review

At the recent Regional Conference, BPW International President Chonchanok.Viravan (Nok) gave a presentation on proposed changes to the constitution and by-laws of BPW International. The process was begun at the 2005 International Congress. The changes will be far-reaching and have implications for all member countries. At the business meeting and in later conversations with Nok, I stressed the value of potential input from the membership.

As a result, BPW Canada has been offered an opportunity to take the lead in reviewing the proposed changes. Immediate Past President Darla Campbell has agreed to coordinate this effort.

UN Commission on the Status of Women

Only a few members from Canada attended the CSW sessions in New York this year, but we did our best to be active participants, both within the BPW contingent and among Canadian NGOs.

BPW Canada signed a group letter on the Gender Equality Architecture (GEA) proposals, which was presented to the UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon and to Member States during the UN International Women's Day events on March 8. The GEA proposals reflect the suggestions made last year by Stephen Lewis, which we endorsed at our convention in July. We also signed the response of Canadian NGOs to Canada's statement to the UN/CSW, expressing disappointment at our government's presentation. By adding our voices and signatures to those of other groups, we hope to make a difference.

Violence against Women and Girls

At the BPWI strategy session in New York, I gave a report on the regional conference panel on violence against women, of which I was the moderator. It was inspiring to hear of all the ways in which the clubs in our region are taking action on this problem. At the CSW sessions, the point was often made that we don't need any more studies or reports about violence; we just need to make it stop – and we can. It's not only about female genital mutilation in Africa or the abuse of child brides in India or the alarming drop in the number of girl children in China. It's also about bullying, harassment, abuse and murder of girls and women right here at home.

Violence against women and girls is a constant and pervasive problem in all our communities, yet governments at all levels are terribly slow to implement the many recommendations that are made following each sensational case. While we continue to pressure the governments to do the right thing, we can and we must also take action both to prevent violence and to support victims. **Every BPW club should have at least one project or program on violence against women.**

As you start to think about next year's activities, please plan to include something on the issue of violence. If you need ideas, please let me know and I'll be glad to pass along suggestions from our sister clubs in the Caribbean and elsewhere. As with most problems, the best solution is to educate and empower women, and - in simplest terms, that's the mandate of BPW.

Fran Donaldson, President 2006-08

International Supper BPW Baie-Comeau 2007

Every February, around the world, BPW clubs celebrate a month dedicated to international. On Tuesday, February 27, 2007, at Hotel Le Comte, BPW Baie-Comeau welcomed a guest speaker originally from Nepal, Dipjaya Sherma Poudryal. In addition to feasting on a dinner typical of her country, we also discovered an exceptional woman, both for her intelligence and her beauty.



France Pelletier, President of BPW Baie-Comeau; Dipjaya Sherma Poudryal, guest speaker; Sophie Girard, member of BPW Baie-Comeau Board and organizer of the event; and Cynthia Labrie, Vice-president, BPW Baie-Comeau.

Dear BPW Canada Member,

The Business and Professional Women's Club of Montreal is proud to welcome the 2007 Annual General Meeting of BPW Canada, which will be held July 7 at the Quality Suites Montréal Aéroport in Pointe-Claire, in conjunction with the mid-term meetings of the Board of Directors, on July 6th and 7th.

The members of our Club are excited about meeting our sister members of BPW Clubs across Canada and to having the opportunity to sit down and share.

We also want to add that Montreal is famous for its warm welcome and excellent restaurants. We hope that you will take advantage of your visit to enjoy all our city has to offer.

We are looking forward to seeing you on July 6 and 7. À bientôt!

Yours sincerely,

Leslie C. West
President
BPW Montreal

News from Montreal

BPW Montreal is on the move. We had wonderful guest speakers, great attendance and a variety of topics, new members, plus good coverage in the various community newspapers.

One of the highlights of the year was the Provincial Conference that was held in Montreal. It was nice to meet other BPW members from all across the province and to share some of our concerns and our goals and dreams for a better world.

Over the past months, our guest speakers covered several facets of life from the environment, to violence in the workplace and, finally, gun control. Each contributed to making our monthly dinners a success. In November, we have a dinner when two scholarships are awarded to young women; one a visible minority studying at Dawson College and the other, the BPW Montreal Judith Litwack scholarship that honors a young woman at Concordia University and Maria Peluso who chairs the scholarship committee did the presentations (see photo).

Joan Macklin, President, BPWCQ, was featured in the Nun's Island newspaper this past month. Congratulations, Joan. Some of our guests also got coverage; Eva Johnson who spoke on the environment and the importance of Thanksgiving, was written up in the Eastern Door of Kahnawake and the Town of Mount Royal Express had an article on our annual brunch in December. Our goal this year is to have someone on community television and radio to speak about our club and the issues that we support.



Vivian Gomez, the Dawson College visible minority recipient and Maria Peluso, Chair, Scholarship Committee, BPW Montreal

A Note from the Resolutions and By-laws Chair, Wilma Evans

The Resolutions committee has received five resolutions for submission to the AGM in July. The topics are as follows:

1. Status of Women Canada Cuts and Changes
2. Restoration of Funding for the Court Challenges Program
3. Child Labour in the Third World
4. Access to Cervical Cancer Vaccine for all Canadian Women
5. Funding for Stride Circles for Federally incarcerated women

On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank Montreal, North Toronto, BPW Virtual Club, and Cambridge Club for their work in preparing these resolutions. In addition, an urgent resolution on the change in budget and mandate of Status of Women Canada has been submitted by London and North and East Toronto Clubs. This resolution will be dealt with prior to the AGM.

The resolutions are on the website. I encourage you to become familiar with them and discuss them within your respective clubs in preparation for the 2007 AGM.

Promoting BPW in Saskatchewan...

Darlene Clevon, Saskatchewan Provincial President and BPW Canada Vice President was invited to give a presentation on BPW at the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association (SUMA) annual convention. There were 80 people from all over Saskatchewan at the February 6 Partner's Program breakfast. The presentation lasted 40 minutes and Darlene received excellent feedback, particularly on the advocacy part of the presentations where she provided information on resolutions from BPW international and national. This is the second time that SUMA has invited Darlene to speak. The first time was last August on the topic of Women in Politics.

The focus of the 51st session of the Commission on the Status of Women at the United Nations in New York was “*The elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child*”. Members of BPW Canada and BPW members from around the world attended these meetings in New York between February 26 and March 10 to participate in the discussions and workshops on this issue. (See reports on Pages 1 and 7)

As BPW member clubs here at home, we can have a major impact on “*The elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child*” by getting involved in one of the projects sponsored and managed by Project Five-0.

Project Five-0 commenced in 1980 with the collaboration of five international women’s organizations. Today there are projects around the world which are managed and funded by these organizations which benefit women in all walks of life. The five organizations are Soroptimist International (SI), International Federation of Business and Professional Women (IFBPW), International Federation of University Women (IFUW), International Council of Women (ICW) and Zonta International. Until recently, Soroptimist International has raised the major portion of the funding for these projects. They are now looking for contributions through the other organizations to finance these very valuable projects.

As you are planning your budgets for the next year and looking for worthwhile projects that interest your members and support our BPW international focus, as well as the Beijing Platform '95, consider making a donation to one of these projects through our international office. Your donation can target a particular project, or be specific to one. You can be assured that the funds will go directly to support the project you choose, as Project Five-0 only sponsors projects where one of the sponsoring organizations has a club that can oversee it. By supporting these projects, you are also helping to eliminate discrimination, poverty and violence against women and girls.

For further information, please visit the Five-0 Website: www.project-five-0.org

*Doris E. Hall, Vice President
Programs and Projects*

BPW Southeast NB meets with their local MP

Several members of the newly-formed BPW Southeast NB held a breakfast meeting with their MP, Dominic LeBlanc, on February 16, 2007. The meeting gave club members an opportunity to present Mr LeBlanc with BPW Canada's 2006 Brief, and to discuss with him the resolutions approved at our Biennial Convention in July 2006. Among the issues raised were access to Employment Insurance for entrepreneurs and the self-employed as well as the financial situation of senior women, 19.1% of who lived in poverty in 2003 in Canada. The theme of the meeting was health, on individual, social, economic and environmental levels. President Rachelle Poirier encouraged those present to raise other issues of concern including childcare, illiteracy, changes to the budget and mandate of Status of Women Canada and environmental issues such as air and water quality.



Sue Calhoun, 1st Vice-president, BPW Canada; Kim Murphy, 1st Vice-president, BPW Southeast NB; Rachelle Poirier, President, BPW Southeast NB; MP Dominic LeBlanc; Charlotte LeBlanc, Stella Bourgeois, Marie-Paule Martin, Jeanne Belliveau and Marie-Lise Lavoie, all members of BPW Southeast NB.

International Constitution

BPW Canada has been invited by the International President, Nok Viravan, to participate in a consultation on proposed amendments to the International Constitution. (As Canada was one of the founding countries of the international organization over 75 years ago, this opportunity is quite appropriate.) Darla Campbell has been asked to lead this initiative. This task force will be active from May to Sept by e-mail. If you are interested in serving on this task force to provide feedback on the contemplated constitutional amendments, contact Darla at darla@amonavi.com or call 905 845 9760 ext 1.

December 2006 member survey – Results: *Newsletter is the “tie that binds” BPW clubs across the country*

by Sue Calhoun, Chair, Federation Promotion

The last edition of *BPW CONNECTIONS – COAST TO COAST / CONNEXIONS BPW – d’un océan à l’autre* included an insert that asked members whether they preferred to receive their newsletter by e-mail or regular mail. It also surveyed members’ opinions on the newsletters that they received during the past biennium.

We thank those members who responded and provide you with a brief analysis of the answers. Fifteen members responded to the three questions; of these, eight responded in English and two in French. Many more responded to how they wanted to receive their newsletter, most requesting it by e-mail. Members without e-mail service asked, of course, to continue receiving the newsletter through regular post.

It is clear from the responses that the newsletter is an important communication tool. BPW members like to hear about what other clubs are doing across the country. The newsletter is important, several members said, in terms of making members feel integrated, that they are part of a large network. The newsletter is also very useful in terms of keeping members up-to-date on policies and program changes that affect working women in Canada or, as a Penticton, BC member stated, *“keeping track of what Harper is doing to us!”*

Several members said that they like to hear about what BPW Canada is doing on the international level; they also like to be reminded of upcoming events. Some respondents used the opportunity to give short testimonials about BPW Canada, such as this long-time member from London, ON: *“This is a wonderful organization which has helped women.”*

On the role of the newsletter versus that of the web site, several members stated that the content should be the same, especially when there are members who do not have access to the Internet. To some extent, the newsletter is “more personal.” A newer member from Brampton, ON stated that the newsletter and web site should reflect the same information, but that *“the newsletter should drive people to the site.”*

Overall, the comments received were very positive. It’s clear that members value their BPW Canada newsletter as an important tool for keeping in touch. Thanks again to those who participated!

BPW Canada Virtual Club: Help Us Grow!

Greetings sister BPW Canada members! Welcome to our new adventure, the BPW Canada Virtual Club! We were chartered on April 29, 2006 with individual members from across Canada who either did not have a local BPW club or preferred interacting electronically.

One of the principal advantages of BPWC Virtual is that women can access the club when time permits. We can interact by email constantly throughout the month. This allows us the ability to respond quickly to situations as they arise. While BPWC Virtual may be a small club, we have our national organization, BPW Canada, supporting us so we do have a significant voice on national issues.

On January 17, 2007 we successfully hosted our first virtual meeting with MSN messenger. The plan is to have monthly MSN meetings, similar to local BPW Club meetings. BPW Canada has graciously allowed BPW Virtual access to its website so members can retrieve our archived newsletters and other membership information by going to www.bpwcanada.com and scrolling to the BPW Virtual section.

Due to the unique nature of BPWC Virtual Club, the four pillars of BPW Canada are advanced in a different format.

Advocacy is a key focus of BPWC Virtual Club. This is accomplished by proposing and debating resolutions on public policy issues important to women and lobbying the national government. BPWC Virtual had its first resolution accepted at the Biennial Convention of the Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women in July 2006 in Toronto. This involved supporting the work of Stephen Lewis in his efforts to formalize a women's committee within the UN. As well, within a few days BPWC Virtual put together a letter to the Harper government in protest over the alteration of the national childcare program and the federal funding cuts to the Status of Women offices in Canada.

Leadership at this time is in the form of being on the executive or chairing a committee. Our executive consists of our president and secretary/treasurer. Currently our committees are membership, newsletter (Newsbytes), and resolutions. Additionally, there is the ongoing challenge of spearheading a new club with a unique agenda. We are breaking new ground! However, this comes with growing pains and the joys of success with each step we take to formalize BPWC Virtual.

Personal development is also different in an electronic forum, as we do not have regular meetings with a guest speaker. Professional growth can be accomplished, however, with virtual seminars. We hope to access national programs such as Careers Skills and present them to our members in the future as group discussions through MSN.

Networking is also a challenge when the members meet virtually and not face to face. Networking has to be thought of with a different perspective, as we communicate ideas electronically with our BPWC Virtual members and with other BPW clubs across Canada. Membership in BPWC Virtual allows participation in BPW Canada events such as conventions, and even at the provincial and local club level. Another opportunity to network is through mentoring with other virtual members, which may involve support and guidance with a member through such issues as starting up a new business.

As we celebrate our one year anniversary, Val and Shannon have been hatching a marketing plan, both internally through BPW members and externally. National has been working with us on the issue of dual membership with other BPW members in Canada. There are many issues to be worked out, so currently we are piloting a project where other interested BPW Canada members would be guests of the BPW Virtual, and allowed to participate in our discussions. This pilot will be reevaluated in the spring and a more formalized process will be put in place.

This is a call to talk it up about BPWC Virtual Club. If you are a business or professional women in Canada where there isn't a BPW local club...join us! So please promote BPWC Virtual through your local club newsletter to your members and to any women whom you may think would be interested in this unique forum. Look on the national website for updated information, or contact our president Vi Andersen at viandersen@sympatico.ca or membership committee Shannon MacNeill at macfolk@telus.net or Val Clemont at valclemont@xplornet.com.

Yours in BPW Spirit
Shannon MacNeill and Val Clemont
Co-Chairs of BPWC Virtual Club Membership

In addition to your BPW newsletter, *BPW CONNECTIONS – COAST TO COAST / CONNEXIONS BPW – d'un océan à l'autre*, Club presidents receive mailings seven times a year that include information of importance to members. Club presidents are asked to share this information on a regular basis with their members. If you haven't heard anything lately, check with your Club president to make sure that she's receiving these mailings. Your president also recently received a copy of the revised member handbook for every member or your club.

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

On January 20, 2007, BPW Canada released a position statement paper entitled *Prevention of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD): A Call for a Coordinated Comprehensive FASD Strategy*. The paper commends the decisions of the Government of Canada for instituting a national Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder initiative in 1999 and for its subsequent work toward the implementation of a National Framework on FASD.

This topic is of great concern because “women of child bearing age involved in post-secondary education and those in the workforce have been identified as most likely to drink alcohol. Women involved in post-secondary education (18-24) and working women (35-44) with higher education and incomes (\$80,000) are most likely to engage in high-risk alcohol use (five or more drinks) on one occasion. These women are most likely to miss being identified as alcohol consumers during pregnancy by their doctors.”

The following recommendations were made:

1. A Coordinated Comprehensive Multi-Component FASD Strategy
2. Health Canada Partnering with a National Substance Abuse Organization such as the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse
3. Participation by Provincial and Territorial Governments including NGO's and grass roots organizations such as CAP in the development of a FASD Strategy
4. The Development of Professional Public Awareness Campaign as a Major Component of FASD Strategy
5. Universal Prevention Programs Targeting Hi-Risk Age Groups
6. Implementation of Bill C-206 (Private Members Bill) – To legislate warning labels on alcoholic beverage containers.

For a complete copy of the Position Statement, log on to the BPW Canada website @ www.bpwcanada.com

BPW Canada addresses Standing Committee on Status of Women

BPW Canada was invited to appear at a hearing in Ottawa of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women on February 22. This all-party committee is studying the issue of economic security for senior women. Women Elders in Action (WE*ACT) from British Columbia was the only other group invited to present. First vice-president Sue Calhoun made the presentation, using information from BPW Canada's Position Statement on Incomes for Senior Women, developed in 2006 and available on the BPW Canada website (bpwcanada.com). Sue told the Committee that there is an urgent need to act immediately to address the situation of many senior women, especially those living alone, the vast majority of whom live in poverty. She recommended an increase in the Guarantee Income Supplement, restructuring of the Canada Pension Plan and removing taxes from low-income people, among other things. There is also a need to address factors that impact the incomes of working women today – such as the lack of affordable childcare and pay equity, the inability of women entrepreneurs to access maternity benefits under Employment Insurance – if the situation of senior women living in poverty is ever to be ended. BPW Virtual Club members To read Sue's Speaking Notes, go to the Income Equity page of BPW Canada's website or contact Sue directly at scalhoun@nbn.net.nb.ca or 131 Weldon, Shediac, NB E4P 2X6.



Kathy Laing, Sue Calhoun, Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Crystal Sissons

Three great Canadians

We mourn the loss of three great Canadian women of our time – Doris Anderson, June Callwood and Bertha Wilson. As we are saddened by the news of their deaths, we continue to be inspired by the example of their lives and enriched by their legacy.

Articles on the website at www.bpwcanada.com.

“Energy, Anticipation & Hope: The UN 51st Commission on the Status of Women, A Life-changing Experience” By Crystal Sissons – BPW Virtual Club Newsletter Editor and Public Affairs Representative

Would you like to go to the United Nations in New York to participate in the Commission on the Status of Women ? I first heard this question in the early fall of 2006. My initial thought, hmm, well I always imagined that at some point I would end up in New York for something, and while I was there I would take a picture of the UN Building to commemorate seeing it – but I never thought I would actually go in. I was very interested in what the UN was doing and believed in its goals and principles, but I did not picture myself as actively a part of its operation. This question, and the real opportunity that followed it changed my life forever.

First of all, while I have been fortunate to do a fair bit of traveling, I had never been to New York. Thus, the whole experience was novel for me and in the time leading up to the Commission I did my best to prepare. I read additional background information on the UN and its operations, especially those related to women. While this is a normal reaction for an academic, I would highly recommend at the very least reading through Devaki Jain’s *Women, Development and the UN: A Sixty-Year Quest for Equality and Justice* regardless of whether you ever intend to go to the UN. It provides an amazing overview of how the UN works and what women have achieved since the Commission of Women started its operation in 1946. It also provides a reference for terms such as CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women), DAW (Division for the Advancement of Women), and ECOSOC (Economic and Social Council) amongst others which are frequently in use at the Commission, and to a new arrival can seem much like a foreign language.

Upon arriving in New York, I met up with Fran Donaldson. She was an excellent guide for finding my way around New York, the UN itself, and the various procedures and rules to follow and be aware of. Connecting and sharing information and resources amongst members of the BPW Canada is a priceless commodity and one that we should make more use of! In total I was able to spend six full days in New York, participating in the NGO/CSW training day the Sunday before the Commission started, and taking part in many of the events of the first week.



Crystal Sissons and Fran Donaldson during morning briefing February 27th, 2007

Some important advice for those who have not previously attended the CSW:

1. As noted above there is value in pre-planning. Try to do some reading, or at the very least talk with someone who has attended before to give you some idea of what to expect from what kind of clothes to bring to what sites to see.
2. Network within the Canadian and International Federation. Find out who is going and make plans to meet up with them. This also applies to women NGOs and government representatives outside of BPW in your area and nationally, links formed early on help to smooth things along and make for really meaningful meetings on-site.
3. Bring a healthy supply of business cards – this is the time to make excellent contacts from all over the world – and cards are a quick and easy way to remember important meetings.
4. Be open to quick and unpredictable schedule changes as there are multiple events happening in parallel.

Not only do these sessions run in parallel, but they often change by the day, and sometimes the hour – thus securing a daily schedule each day at the NGO morning briefing is essential (By the way attending the NGO morning briefing is worth its weight in gold! In this case it pays to be a morning person!)

There is so many others things that could be mentioned, but I want to end off with some of my strongest memories.

As I type, I take a moment to close my eyes and I can remember first stepping into the main UN Building itself. My eyes instantly went up due to the height of the building and the art displays which automatically draw your attention skyward, while at the same time taking your breath away. I felt like a tourist, which I was, but I felt something else too – energy, anticipate and most importantly *hope*. Throughout the week we heard of many awful situations around the world, but we also were assured of the will and desire for change, and the hope to make it a reality – again and again the phrase was repeated in various ways “think globally, act locally.” That is part of our power – power to hold our governments accountable for the international agreements like the Outcome document which was being prepared at the CSW. The energy was further infused by the number of children, teenagers and young adults in attendance from around the world who could with just a few words cut right to the heart of issues previously surrounded by lengthy bureaucratic or academic explanations. Their energy was intense and exuded *hope*, hope based on the belief that they and their peers could effect *real* change, and that was tangible and caught hold of all those who were open to it. While it is true about life in general, that you get out what you put in, this was proven hour by hour of every day that I spent actively engaged at the CSW.

The people made a major impression on me, and included women and men from various member states and NGOs. I especially cherished the time to get to know some of our Young BPW Members from around the world include Rooma Para (IBPW Young BPW Chairperson) and Deon (Naphaphen

Vejjajiva – Director of IBPW President’s Office/Young BPW Chairperson – Thailand), while the IBPW Caucus meeting allowed the international BPW family a chance to meet and greet! Meeting, and working with representatives from other Canadian NGOs and government representatives was an eye-opening experience as it helped clarify the working nature of policy formation, with both its positive and negative aspects. These negotiations did not always result with consensus, but they helped to establish links between clubs, and a means for expressing ideas and working towards positive change.

Finally, I also remember the fun! I remember laughing with women from around the world. Singing and clapping along with performances, exchanging stories and experiences over coffee or a meal, and bonding with amazing people from all ages and walks of life. The UN building may be on international land, but it is the people who make it truly international, and it is those same people reaching beyond themselves to connect in hope for the positive changes that will make a *real* impact on our world. I am aware that my sentiments may seem idealistic and even a bit naïve, but it is only with ideals, hope and vision that we can reach out and touch our dreams, so why not set the bar high? Change at times does not come fast enough, while at other times it seems to move backward, but if we continue on the path of hope, fueled with determination, history has shown a record of amazing successes. The only problem with success stories is that most often they are not considered newsworthy enough compared to the disasters.

If there is one major reason to go to the UN Commission on the Status of Women, it is to soak up the energy, passion, and hope that beats within it – and has since 1946 – as these will open your eyes anew to the possibilities for change at the local, provincial, national and global levels of our world. The people, the meetings, the networking is all wrapped into this, so open the door to the possibility, and when hear the question: Would you like to go to the 52nd Commission on the Status of Women in New York in 2008 – say YES! It changed my life, it will change yours!

Inspirational Contributions: in the eyes of a young aboriginal woman.

By Tori-Lynn Wanotch
Winner of the Business and Professional Women Saskatoon Essay Contest for International Women’s Day, 2007

An elder told me once; there is nothing in this world like a Mother’s love. He said, when times get hard, like they sometimes do, and we feel all alone in this world. All we need do is think of a Mother’s love and we will get by. That is why the creator gave this gift to us.

When I think of the Community where I live and how it can forget about its women while they are missing or being abused, I can’t help but to think about the mothers and their children that here are without them. And I think about my

mother and wonder what she would do if it were me missing or being abused or otherwise being let down by a system that was supposed to be designed to protect me. I wonder how hard she would fight with all of her unconditional love to ensure that I came home. Who would she turn to for help? Perhaps she would turn to the women who believe in initiatives such as the Sisters in Spirit Campaign that has been created by the Native Women’s Association of Canada (NWAC) and Amnesty International, to raise awareness about the epidemic of missing and murdered aboriginal women in Canada.

I live in a nation that has lost a lot of its sisters. Women who are treated as second rate citizens even in a country that claims to have reached a level of equality for all women and yet can still sit back as these injustices are a repetitive and common occurrence. Organizations like NWAC and Amnesty International have made it possible for individual people like myself to be a part of a fight against this injustice and infringements on basic human rights such as these. I have been privileged to be a woman, a part of the fight and I like to think that I am following in the footsteps of some of our nations bravest and most courageous people.

People like Kim Campbell, the first women Prime minister of Canada; Cairine Wilson the first women appointed to the Canadian senate in 1930; the women who fought for and gained the right to vote in 1918. And further the women who fought to be recognized as persons under the Canadian law, in 1929.

This generation of women is still making leaps and bounds when it comes to attempting to reach ‘equality’. Unfortunately that means that there is still a lot of work to do. We work diligently for equal rights, equal wages. We fight for our children and the next seven generations to come.

We are grandmothers, mothers, sisters, daughters and granddaughters. We are beautiful, cultured, creative and intelligent. We are leaders and innovators. We are chiefs, politicians, senators, and clan mothers.

International Women’s Day signifies recognition of all of this; the struggles, the accomplishments, the lives and loves of all women. The women who have done great things, those who have held them up and lent them strength; those who still work to make change and those who will make change after we are gone; are working together tirelessly to ensure that we have a richer quality of life and all the opportunities that we dare to dream for.

From this Edition’s Editor: Thank you to each of you who have taken the time to make a contribution to this newsletter. Without your support, we would not be able to produce this publication. Your stories, articles and news pieces allow us to share our successes amongst our BPW sisters all across this vast country. Keep your submissions coming. We love to hear from you!

Julie McSorley, Editor