



BPW Connections – Coast to Coast is the official publication of BPW Canada.

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We're on the web! Check out our new website.  
[www.bpwcanada.com](http://www.bpwcanada.com)

#### President's message

## The election that never was

By Sue Calhoun

Thirty-eight days later and where have we come? Stephen Harper's Conservative government had 127 members going into the election, when it was called on September 7th. From early reports, he finished with 143. A stronger minority, not the majority government he hoped for. Not much of a change for the \$300 million that the election cost Canadian taxpayers.

There will be much speculation in the days and weeks to come about the results. One thing is clear. The fact that the Conservatives with only 37% of the popular vote can win 143 seats, and the Greens with 7% win none speaks to the serious need for electoral reform in this country. Our current "first past the post" system means a lot of votes count for nothing.

As you know, BPW Canada is a non-partisan organization. That means that we do not take positions on particular parties or politicians. This does not mean, however, that BPW Canada does not stand for anything. Through our resolutions process, we make decisions about priorities of our organization, things we believe need to be done to make Canada better for women and girls. In the past two years, BPW Canada's priorities and those of the Harper government have differed in several areas. So here are some key issues that will drive our agenda in the next while:

- In 2006, Stephen Harper gutted Status of Women Canada, closing 12 of 16 offices across the country, and no longer funding advocacy or research.
- He introduced the Universal Child Care Benefit of \$100 per year per child under six (taxable), and called it "delivering choice in childcare." However, as the group *Code Blue for child care* ([www.buildchildcare.ca](http://www.buildchildcare.ca)) rightly states, the \$100 is not child care, it is income support for parents. The money can be spent on anything. Growth in child care spaces has slowed since the UCCB was introduced. Centre closings and staff shortages are rampant. And, if families are lucky enough to find a child care space, fees are between \$600 and \$1,500 per month. There is no evidence to show that parents who need child care have more choice.
- He has consistently said no to recognizing that pay equity is a fundamental human right and to introducing a new proactive federal Pay Equity law that would put an obligation on employers to comply, as opposed to the current complaint-based approach. This, despite recommendations made in the federal Pay Equity Task Force Report in 2004.
- Of all the parties, the Conservatives had the worst showing in terms of the number of women candidates running in winnable seats – only 15%. Early results show that only 16% of elected Conservatives were women.

One bright spot – the Conservatives promised to give self-employed Canadians access to Employment Insurance maternity and parental benefits, something that BPW Canada has been advocating. We'll hold them to it, and we will also be pushing for a complete review of the EI Act, which is not working for women. Stay tuned.

**For BPW Canada policy positions check our Index of Resolutions**

[www.bpwcanada.com](http://www.bpwcanada.com)

## BPW Montreal hosts BPW Canada President



BPW Canada President Sue Calhoun spoke to the first meeting of the season of BPW Montreal. Four new members joined that night! In the photo, from left, Rosie Robertson, Secretary; Erin Kennedy, President; Sue Calhoun, BPW Canada President; Celine Leduc (back), International Affairs Chair; Patricia Sidhom, Treasurer; Mary Ozcan, VP; Leslie West, Immediate Past President; Joan Macklin, BPW Canada Vice-president; and Rosetta Cadogan, Personal Development Chair and PR.

BPW Canada has 4 key areas of activity:

- Awareness, advocacy & action
- Leadership skills & career development
- Personal development
- Supportive networks & lasting friendships

Interested in joining?  
Click  
[www.bpwcanada.com/](http://www.bpwcanada.com/)  
Find a club near you.

No club near you?  
Contact us and we'll  
help you start one.  
[bpwcanada@bpwcanada.com](mailto:bpwcanada@bpwcanada.com)

**53<sup>rd</sup> Session in  
NEW YORK  
March 2-13, 2009**



**Commission on the  
Status of Women**

Theme: **"The equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including care giving in the context of HIV/AIDS"**

One of the benefits of membership in BPW is that members have the opportunity to attend the annual meeting of the Committee on the Status of Women at the United Nations in New York as an observer, and gain the experience of attending the UN. At the same time, there will be workshops that you can attend, and the AGM for BPW International New York is usually held during that period. BPWI also usually hosts a dinner for BPW members from around the world.

To attend, you will need to request a **Letter of Confirmation** through BPW International. This simply requires that you send an email message to the International President's office by December 1<sup>st</sup> and the request will be made on your behalf to obtain the letter. Once it is issued by the United Nations, it will be sent to BPW International, and they will forward it to you. You must present this letter in order to obtain a security pass at the United Nations so that you can proceed to the CSW meeting.

For background information, visit <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/53sesspriorityhtm.htm>  
Information from the previous CSW meeting is available at: <http://www.bpw-international.org/pdf/BPW%20Guideline%20to%20attend%20CSW%202008.pdf>

Further information will be sent out from the International office as we approach the date. If you are considering attending at this meeting, please advise President Sue Calhoun ([scalhoun@nbnet.nb.ca](mailto:scalhoun@nbnet.nb.ca)), as she will be leading the delegation from Canada. Note that the session runs for two weeks, although in the past BPW Canada's delegation has tended to stay for one week only. It is wise to arrive the Saturday before the session starts (i.e. February 28<sup>th</sup>) in order to avoid long line ups for accreditation. There is usually an orientation session on the Sunday. If you've never been before, this will be a life-changing experience for you! Don't miss it!

*Doris Hall, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, International Affairs Chair*

## ***BPW Calgary launches Mentoring Program***

Submitted by Barb Francis  
BPW Calgary President  
[barbfrancis@shaw.ca](mailto:barbfrancis@shaw.ca)

To increase the membership of BPW Calgary, to support the BPW cornerstones of leadership and professional development as well as to support the Club's vision of empowering women to reach their full potential are all goals of BPW Calgary's new membership mentoring program. This program was kicked off at our October dinner meeting, which included sharing the details of the program to our members and guests and featured a diverse and interesting panel of female leaders, all of whom had experienced mentoring first hand. They shared their insights and stories as to how being either a mentor or protégé had significantly impacted both their professional and personal life.

The mentoring program's components include:

- Completion of a detailed application by both the mentor and protégé.
- Pairing of participants by the Mentoring Committee and announcing of the pairs at our November dinner meeting.
- Establishing goals/outcomes by the mentor and protégé for their mentoring relationship.
- Attending the BPW Calgary leadership/mentoring workshop as part of the November dinner meeting.
- Attending at least three BPW Calgary dinner meetings together from December through May, which would include another leadership workshop.
- Participating in one BPW Calgary community outreach activity together.
- Attending the BPW Calgary year-end celebration event, which includes the graduation ceremony for the mentoring program.

Based upon the response and interest by our members and guests, we are excited about achieving the program's goals. Check out our website [www.members.shaw.ca/bpwcalgary](http://www.members.shaw.ca/bpwcalgary) for more information about the program.



From left, Pauline Ngure and BPW Calgary member Lia Robinson (mentor and protégé from the Women's Resource Centre [U of C] Mentoring Program – one of our partners), Ronnalee McMahon, Action Circle Consulting Ltd., a firm specializing in mentoring and Stephanie Garrett, Executive Director of the Women's Resource Centre.

## ***Pay Equity on the agenda***



A BPW Ontario delegation had very successful meetings with the Pay Equity Commissioner, The Minister Responsible for Women's Issues and the Attorney General in Toronto on September 17, 2008. There are hopeful signs that a new approach to eliminating the wage gap, that engages stakeholders in changing attitudes, is gaining acceptance. Read the full report at [www.bpwcandada.com/](http://www.bpwcandada.com/). In the photo, Carol Kollar, BPW Ontario President; Sheila Crook, BPW Ontario Past President; Deb Matthews, Minister Responsible for Women's Issues; Doris Hall, 1st Vice President BPW Canada; Karin Gorgerat, Immediate Past President, BPW Ontario.

### **Thank you ~ Merci!**

I would like to congratulate the Winnipeg committee for the success of the 2008 Convention. As it was my first participation, I cannot compare, but I appreciated the warm welcomes and the friendships that I experienced while there. Also it made me realize the importance of the work BPW does all across Canada and around the world. I believe that by being there, you cannot help it but become more involved in BPW causes.

**Julie Leclerc**  
President ~ Présidente  
BPW Québec

## ***BPW Calgary Takes back the night***

Submitted by Lia Robinson, BPW Calgary

"One, two, three, four, we won't take it any more! Five, six, seven, eight, no more violence, no more hate!" So went one of the many chants at the September 13th *Take Back the Night* event in Calgary. A few BPW members decided to pursue involvement in local advocacy events, and participated in this year's march. It is important to do advocacy as a club for those in the community, and this year, BPW Calgary made a decision to encourage informal involvement in the events happening in the city. Partnerships and interactions with other groups doing good works is a way to introduce BPW to others outside of the professional environment. And that is exactly what our BPW members did that warm Saturday night in September. This peaceful march brings attention to a very real concern in our cities, the safety of women at night.



Women in Calgary have been marching since 1982 as a symbol of the commitment to stop the epidemic of violence perpetrated against women in communities. The march organizers hope to inspire a new generation to rise-up and stop the cycle of violence. The march was inspiring and strengthened the bonds of our committed BPW members. In the photo, from left, BPW members Amanda Osborne, Lia Robinson, Lila Smith and Mary O'Sullivan.

## ***Membership retention a critical ingredient for successful clubs***

BPW Canada, along with our International Federation, has been focusing on new membership development. But as BPWI 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-president Liz Benham reminds us, the second part of this important ingredient for successful clubs and federations is **Membership Retention**. In a presentation to Convention 2008 in Winnipeg, Liz challenged clubs: *What systems do you currently have in place that evaluate, review and maintain your membership?* Here's a five-step process that she suggested clubs could use.

- 1) What communications are used to connect members to your club? If they can't attend meetings, do you have processes in place for them to stay connected? Do you have a newsletter, for example, or a website? Does your website include links to other levels of the organization such as BPW Canada [www.bpwcanada.com](http://www.bpwcanada.com) and our International Federation [www.bpwinternational.org](http://www.bpwinternational.org)?
- 2) Do you have interesting educational and professional programs that encourage members to attend meetings? Do you regularly ask their feedback about what they like?
- 3) Where's the « value-added » for your members? Is the club valuable to them? Do they receive a return on investment of their time and money? Do they feel that they can contribute and share their skills and expertise in the club and that it is appreciated? Does the club truly support and promote each others' businesses and professions? Is the leadership inclusive?
- 4) What systems are in place to follow up with new members or first timers to make them feel welcome and, for at least the first six months, to provide them with an understanding about BPW?
- 5) Lastly, what membership renewal methods does your club have to ensure that everyone renews and that no one is left behind? Do you analyze your annual retention and growth rate and is this taken into account when the annual budget is drafted?

### ***Life membership for BPW Montreal member***



Helen Dearlove (centre) received her Life Membership at the September meeting of BPW Montreal. In the photo, with Helen, BPW Canada President Sue Calhoun (left) and Erin Kennedy, BPW Montreal President

***We make our BPW members visible – sign on***  
[www.bpw-business.org/](http://www.bpw-business.org/)