

## MONTREAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN – LE CONSEIL DES FEMMES DE MONTRÉAL

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## President's Message

As I sit here today, writing this missive, it is actually International Women's Day, Sunday the 8th of March and many celebrations are being held not only today but continuing on during the week. It is also a day when the Fourth World March for Women, 'Marche mondiale des femmes' is being launched in Montreal. In Montreal, women marched against the city's austerity measures, health, education and women's centres which of course have an impact on all citizens but affect women more. And while we continue to celebrate the achievements of women and some advancement towards equality, there are still many challenges remaining concerning the violence against women, the harassment, oppression; gender equality in all areas of life has not been achieved in any country.

The MCW March meeting saw the panel discussion on the UN theme, 'Make it happen' where we heard from the **Honourable Marlene Jennings**, retired lawyer and former Member of Parliament, **Mme Manon Gauthier**, City of Montreal municipal councillor responsible for the status of women and **Mme Mair Verthuy, CM**, MCW member and former MCW President, who all gave us their very inspiring views on where women stand and how we can each 'make it happen.' It was good to see many of you at this meeting and by the time you receive this Bulletin, you will be in the midst of the preparing for the Easter holiday week-end and enjoying the warmer weather that has happily come our way, somewhat. The sun is shining and we are all looking forward to beautiful flowers, fresh vegetables and aromatic herbs. Spring is definitely in the air even if there is still snow on the ground.

The 59<sup>th</sup> UN Commission on the Status of Women is underway as the NGOs along with representatives of members states discuss where to go from here after the Beijing plus 20 which marks twenty years since the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action at the Fourth World Conference on Women. We must continue to take action shine the light in areas that need our support to make it happen for all women and humanity.

The NCWC AGM is fast approaching and we hope that you will join us at this conference as we move forward together. The April meeting also brings an invitation to all of you to shed light on issues facing us: the conveners will present their findings and we invite you to join us in shedding the light and sharing your information so that we can act together in solidarity.

– Dr. Chitra Chopra, President

**NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMAN OF CANADA (NCWC) AGM MAY 21 – 24, 2015 MONTREAL, QUEBEC**

### INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY and the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Vote – Montreal City Hall

The City of Montreal in celebration of International Women's Day and the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the right to vote for women in Quebec honoured two former Municipal councillors, "Bâtisseuses de la Cité": Idola Saint-Jean who worked hard with Thérèse Casgrain in the fight to win the right to vote for Quebec women and Léa Cousineau, the first woman to Chair the Executive Committee of the City of Montreal.

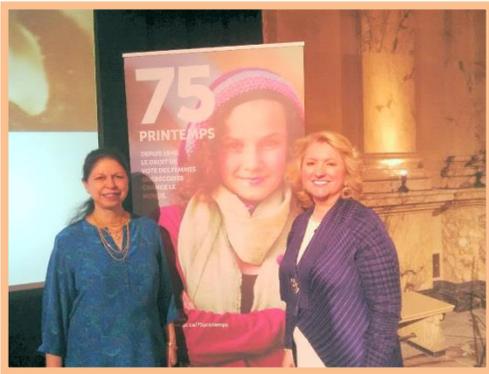
In a recent article written for "Chatelaine Magazine" (French

who is a member of the Executive Committee of the City of Montreal, responsible for a number of portfolios, including, culture, heritage, space for life and the status of women to name a few, was quoted as stating the following:

«Pour faire mon travail d'élue, je dois  
(Continued on page 2)

#### MCW APRIL LUNCHEON MEETING

Lunch will be served at 12 noon at the cost of \$10:00 per person, payable at the door. Please advise Frances Gregory (514) 935-1674 or e-mail: [frances.gregory@videotron.ca](mailto:frances.gregory@videotron.ca) if you plan to attend.



Dr. Chitra Chopra, President, and  
the Honourable Eleni Bakopanos  
VP Governmental Affairs - MCW  
75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Vote  
Montreal City Hall

International (Continued from page 1)

Edition), Madame Manon Gauthier was quoted as stating the following:

“Pour faire mon travail d'élue, je dois retourner dans le passé afin de comprendre le chemin parcouru. Et pour voir où on s'en va.» Madame Gauthier went on to say, “that in fact the first woman to be elected to City Council was Jessie Kathleen Fisher who was elected on December 9th, 1940 the same year as the vote was granted to Quebec women, and that shamefully no street in Montreal bears her name.

We congratulate these 'trail blazers' and thank **Madame Manon Gauthier**, for this initiative.

– Honourable Eleni Bakopanos

## MAKE IT HAPPEN

(Theme: United Nations 2015, International Women's Day)

### MCW, MARCH 5, 2015 PANEL DISCUSSION

Moderator: **The Honourable Eleni Bakopanos**, Queen's Privy Council

Panelists: **Mme Manon Gauthier**, Member Executive Committee, Ville de Montreal, responsible culture, heritage, design, space for life and status of women

**Mme Mair Verthuy, CM**, First principal, Simone de Beauvoir Institute, Concordia University, women's Studies

**The Honourable Marlene Jennings, P.C.**, Former Member of Parliament, Liberal Party of Canada, House of Commons



Hon. Marlene Jennings, Dr. Chitra Chopra, Mme Manon Gauthier, Hon. Eleni Bakopanos, Mme Mair Verthuy

The discussion opened with **Mme Manon Gauthier**, who spoke about her humble beginnings and her belief in gender parity rather than gender equality. Gauthier has a broad background in the arts, business and communication. She is trying to build a better world one person at a time. When Mayor Coderre gave her the responsibility for the portfolio of “condition feminine,” she told him that women's issues were not a “condition” and changed the name of the portfolio to “statu de la femme.” She has worked on an equality initiative that would make Montreal the city of equality. Women form 52% of the population and have more university degrees than men. There are not many women in politics but many

women hesitate to run for political office for a number of reasons including balancing their family and work responsibilities. There needs to be better access for young women to work in democracy and politics as parity comes from access.

In 1940, there were only three women on Montreal's City council; now 41% of elected officials in Montreal are women, which is the highest number in any municipality in Canada. Montreal also boasts the highest number of police women and the highest number of women firefighters of any municipality. We need to look at how far we have come, and what the next priority will be, and this priority must have a gender perspective.

Madame Gauthier believes in equality and will fight for it. While economic development is a huge priority in Montreal, one crucial issue that remains to be addressed is that of the number of homeless women and part of that issue is getting these women off the streets and into safe and affordable housing, as well as assistance for their multiple health and economic problems. Gauthier suggested that this is an issue where MCW and all women can assist herself and the City to make it happen.

Madame Gauthier expressed her pleasure in welcoming the NCWC AGM attendees to a cocktail reception at City Hall on May 21<sup>st</sup> and also, this year for International Women's Day, Montreal is celebrating the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of women's right to vote in Quebec; there is also a call to take action on women's equality.

**Madame Mair Verthuy, CM** spoke of her Welsh roots and her “longish” life in France, which along with her pedagogical bent and feminist interests enabled her to promote women's studies. She believes that women must do things for other women in order to move ahead.

She suggested that we should each find a half hour a week to write to the Prime Minister, our MP or our MNA about what matters to us. We should write, email or call about any issue or concerns we have or if there is something that we want; let them know our opinion. It appears that each letter written to an elected official is considered to be representative of ten opinions in their constituency. Mair profoundly believes that women need pay equity and not equal pay for equal work, because we do not have equal work. This means we need to work for equal pay for work of equal value and this premise must be legislated and enforced over time. The only province to have this enshrined in law at this time is Quebec. Only six provinces have pay equity and only Quebec has public and private pay equity legislation. While we have the Charter of Rights, it is difficult to use the charter to fight for pay equity. Mair further stressed the importance of letting your government representative know that you want pay equity because it affects not only your working life but also your retirement. Women need an equitable basic income. Finally, Ms Verthuy stated that we all need to exercise our hard earned political franchise and speak up by voting.

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*Make It Happen (Continued from page 2)*

**The Honourable Marlene Jennings** was the first Black woman to be elected from Quebec to the Parliament of Canada. She has been the former Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for International Cooperation, the Solicitor General of Canada and the Prime Minister. She believes in education as a priority and that educating a woman benefits everybody. She stated that there is no gender equality in politics and that the number of women in the House of Commons has dropped from 30 percent to 21 percent. It has been proven that the critical mass for effecting change in any institution is 30 percent.

Moreover, Prime Minister Harper has removed per-vote-subsidies which allow political parties to finance elections and this will take effect on April 1 of this year. The subsidies had been instituted to make up for the elimination of corporate and union donations to federal political parties. Canada does have legislation regarding employment equity in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms for women, visible minorities, aboriginals and the handicapped. Marlene introduced a Private Member's Bill when she was in Parliament that would give federal political parties a government subsidy when the number of women in their caucus reaches 40 percent. There would also be a subsidy for the number of aboriginal and handicapped members elected. Unfortunately the bill was never debated and died on the order paper.

Jennings stated that there is a vacuum of women's voices in Parliament. This is unfortunate because it has been proven that an increased number of women in parliament, results in a better educated population, better public policy and increased economic benefits. Me. Jennings believes that MCW can "make it happen" by expressing its support for this subsidy which would lead to greater representation of women in the Canadian Parliament.

– Dr. Chitra Chopra, Honourable Eleni Bakopanos

**NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMAN OF CANADA  
(NCWC) AGM MAY 21 - 24, 2015  
MONTREAL, QUEBEC**

**Thursday, May 21, 2015**

**Cocktail reception, Montreal City Hall, 5 p.m.**

**By reservation.**

**Friday, May 22, 2015 - Dinner 6 p.m. - Tickets \$35**

**Saturday, May 23, 2015**

**NCWC Banquet 6 p.m. - Tickets \$50**

**Plenary, AGM and other sessions will take place during the day from Friday morning to Sunday noon.**

**Registration information will be sent out shortly.**



**SENIORS  
ACTION  
QUEBEC**

A SENIORS NETWORK ...FOR SENIORS ... BY SENIORS



**REMINDER" EARLY BIRD REGISTRATON DEADLINE April 1st"**

**BILL 52: END-OF LIFE CHOICES**

**CONFERENCE**

**APRIL 27<sup>TH</sup>, 2015 - 8:30 AM- 5:00 PM  
La Plaza**

**420 Sherbrooke Street West  
Montreal, QC, H3A 1B4**

On April 27th, 2015, Seniors Action Quebec will be hosting a timely conference in English on Bill 52, End-of-Life Choices. Please note that presentations will be given in English

Speakers are booked and it will be a very impressive group of presenters bringing you information on this complex subject. This conference is not only for seniors but also important to all adults.

Seniors Action Quebec wants you to have the information to enable you to begin discussions with the key people in your lives, put your affairs in order the proper way and not have to do this in the midst of an emergency situation.

There will be kiosks that will provide additional information on many services, advocacy groups and on aids that can make your quality of life better.

Participants will include seniors, family members, healthcare professionals, medical students, caregivers, community organizations that provide direct services to seniors and the community-at-large.

Please note that presentations will be given in English

For additional information and to receive a Registration Form, please contact Ruth Pelletier, President, Seniors Action Quebec, [ruthpelletier613@gmail.com](mailto:ruthpelletier613@gmail.com) note **everyone must register in advance**

Do take advantage of the Early Bird deadline of April 1st and final deadline to register is April 17<sup>th</sup>.

**MCW Article and Announcement Submissions**

The next issue of **The Bulletin** will be in March. Please submit your articles, announcements and photos by the 10<sup>th</sup> day of April via email to:

[mcwbulletineditor@gmail.com](mailto:mcwbulletineditor@gmail.com)

**Please note our new bulletin email address.**

## MCW PROGRAM 2014-2015

- **APRIL 2, 2015 - Dida Berku - ENVIRONMENT**  
- Counselor in the City of Côte Saint-Luc,  
Quebec and an Attorney at Law -environment
- **MAY 14, 2015 - MCW AGM -**  
**Dr. Clarence Epstein - Professor Concordia -**  
**"THE DINIACOPOULOS COLLECTION OF**  
**ANTIQUITIES"**
- **MAY 21 - 24, 2015 - NATIONAL**  
**COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF CANADA AGM**

### The McGill Women's Alumnae Association (MWAA)

**Title:** Annual General Meeting & Networking Brunch

**Date/Time:** May 2, 2015 at 11am – 1pm

**Location:** Omni Hotel, Salon Pierre de Coubertin

(1050 Sherbrooke St W)

**Cost:** \$40 (pre-registration is required)

**RSVP:** [montreal.registrar@mcgill.ca](mailto:montreal.registrar@mcgill.ca) or [514-398-1248](tel:514-398-1248)

The McGill Women's Alumnae Association (MWAA) invites you to the latest installment of our popular Networking Brunch, with special guest speaker Chantal Sorel, Senior VP of Business Development, from SNC-Lavalin.

This exciting career development event will include a brief Annual General Meeting, where we will present our slate of executive officers for 2015-16 before turning things over to our guest speaker.

Finally, we'll enjoy a delicious brunch buffet, and you will have opportunities to engage in some professional and personal networking. Don't forget your business cards!

Seating is limited, so register early to avoid disappointment.

- The Honourable Eleni Bakopanos, PC President  
McGill Women's Alumnae Association

## UWCM

The Public Foundation of the University Women's Club of Montreal Inc.  
La Fondation Publique du Club des Femmes Universitaires de Montreal Inc.

### FOUNDATION FEST 2015

**PLEASE MARK APRIL 15, 2015 FOR THE EVENT OF THE YEAR!**

Montreal is known for the Jazz Fest and the Comedy Fest but this will be the star of all FESTS !

Our Foundation Auction had lost some zest, but it will be back with the fest !

Only top items for the auction so there is no waste of your valuable time :

SIX truly exciting LIVE auction items (already in hand), to be

called out by the one & only Roxane Stanners

Silent Auction items (min value \$100 each, starting bids \$ 30)

Chinese Auction items – minimum value \$ 25 each

Furthermore all donations > \$50.00 by cheque to the Foundation, donated April 15, go into a draw for dinner for 2 at the Atwater Club and you get a tax receipt.

All monies raised go 100% to our beneficiaries:

Women's Shelters

Chez Doris, Auberge Shalom, Nature Women's Shelter, Auberge Madeleine

Bursaries for mature women returning to school at Dawson

College & Concordia (Incl Betsy Barber Fund)

**Please call me to donate items to the auction or if you**

**have any questions at 438-792-9263**

**You may drop off items for the Silent & Chinese Auctions at the valets at Le Crystal, 1100 de la Montagne (corner Rene Levesque) after March 23**

**Please mark: Elizabeth Wirth # 1606 and state value inside the package**

Thank you for your generosity.

Sincerely

Elizabeth Wirth

President, UWC Foundation