

OUR EXCLUSIVE LOOK

Q & A

with Pat Joyce

Regional Director, Canadian Federation of University Women

By Tamara Shephard



Courtesy photo

**THE CANADIAN FEDERATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN (CFUW)** Etobicoke chapter is one of 112 CFUW clubs across Canada involving nearly 9,000 women.

It is committed to pursuing knowledge, promoting education, improving the status of women and girls and actively participating in public issues.

Pat Joyce, chair of the Etobicoke chapter's program committee, twice past-president and a CFUW regional director for south-central Ontario, spoke with the Guardian about the nearly 300-strong women's club and its more than 60-year history in Etobicoke.

**1 What is the CFUW chapter all about? What is your mandate?**

We're concerned with issues affecting women and girls, and other issues, like the environment, childcare, democracy. We're part of the provincial, national and international university women's group. We have more than 35 interest groups, including

advocacy; bridge; dining out and travel; food; fitness and health; helping in the community; learning; reading, the arts and investments.

Anyone is welcome to attend our open meeting Thursday, Sept. 11 at 7 p.m. All our interest groups are

there to discuss what they do and when they meet. People are welcome to come and shop around. Generally, people come because they know someone in the organization.

**2 What is little-known about your chapter? What would people be surprised to learn about your organization?**

Part of our membership fee automatically goes to our scholarship fund, which raises roughly \$8,000 a year. We have longstanding bursaries with U of T, York, Ryerson and Humber College now that it grants degrees. Across the

country, the more than 100 CFUW clubs raise approximately \$1 million a year in scholarship money for high school students, as well as for undergrad and post-grad university students.

Each Christmas, our

interest groups donate raffle gifts. The \$1,500 to \$1,800 that raises each year is split between Ernestine's Women's Shelter and Women's Habitat.

**3 Tell us about your organization's advocacy work.**

It happens locally and nationally. Every year, clubs across the country develop resolutions.

Last year, one of the resolutions approved at the national convention was enhancing the Canada Pension Plan to

provide additional CPP and QPP (Quebec Pension Plan) to compensate retired people who left the workforce due to child care or to care for an elderly, seriously ill or disabled family member. We discuss resolutions annu-

ally in March. Then we send our suggestions back to the national office and to the club that developed it. Then it goes to the annual AGM and the delegates vote on it. Then it becomes policy.

**4 Who can become members of your group?**

We ask that our members have an interest in public affairs, educational, cultural, political, social and related fields. We also welcome

people who don't have university degrees. We ask that you support the objectives of the organization. Members are people who are outgoing;

who are seeking like-minded individuals to do interesting things with.

**5 Tell us about your programs, and your 2014-2015 speaker series that begins this fall.**

I've been the head of the program committee for eight years. I just love it. I seek out and book all the speakers for our monthly meetings. People always ask me, 'How do you get these people?' I tell them, 'I ask them.' Most people will say yes. It's just a matter of finding the right date.

On Oct. 9, we have journalist Catherine Porter talking

on Hot Spots of the World. She writes about social justice for the *Toronto Star* on topics such as international development, women's rights, poverty, the environment and community activism. On Nov. 13, we have Ted Barris, an accomplished author, journalist and broadcaster speaking about his book, *The Great Escape: A Canadian*

*Story*. At Christmastime, we always have music and entertainment. On Jan. 8, our speaker will be Dena Coward, vice-president, project management, games planning and athlete village with the Toronto 2015 Pan Am and Parapan Pan Am Games. We have a couple Pan Am Games' venues in Etobicoke.

**6 Where and when do you meet? How can someone become a member?**

We hold our monthly meeting on the second Thursday night of every month at the Lothian Centre, 80 Lothian Ave. A reception starts at 7:30

p.m. Speakers start at 8 p.m. Anyone interested in becoming a member can come to our Sept. 11 meeting at 7 p.m. or contact our membership

convenor at membership@cfuwetobicoke.ca

Visit [www.cfuwetobicoke.ca](http://www.cfuwetobicoke.ca) for more information.