

President's Year-End Report 2012 – 2013

This has been another successful year for CFUW Etobicoke. We have an active membership and strong numbers. In this report I will summarize our activities for the past year and identify challenges that, I think, need to be addressed as we move forward.

Our membership numbers are currently about 296 – this is higher than it has been in recent years. Most new members join because they know a current member. This speaks to the satisfaction of our current members in that they recommend the Club. Unfortunately, however, we have a very homogeneous membership and if we are to remain relevant in our community, we must find ways to broaden the diversity of our membership.

Our monthly General Meetings are usually well attended. We continue to meet at Fairfield Centre and, although, the centre is very affordable and accommodating, there is continued concern that holding our meetings in a Seniors' Centre does not help us draw women who either are not seniors or do not want to identify themselves as seniors.

We have more than 40 Interest Groups. The majority of our members identify this as being what they are most interested in – it is what drew them to the Club and what keeps them in the Club.

Our members generously donated to the Charitable Trust through direct donations and their support of our Card Party. The Awards Committee under the leadership of Cathy Sbrolla, was able to donate this money for bursaries at four postsecondary institutions: University of Toronto, York University, Ryerson University and Humber Institute. Our endowments at both York University and Humber also paid out this year. As well, two community agencies received donations: Stonegate Community Health Centre and Rexdale Community Health Centre. Donations raised at our Christmas Party were given to the two women's shelters: Ernestine's and Women's Habitat.

We had 5 or 6 of our members attending each of the three Ontario Council Standing Committee meetings held this year. As well, Barb Willoughby represented our Club at the Ontario Council AGM in Sudbury. Pat Ferbyack and Gail Rutherford (incoming VP) will attend the National AGM and Conference in Saskatoon this summer. Participation at these events provides us with good educational and networking opportunities.

After an absence of a few years, we resumed our participation at the Government and Community Services Fair hosted by MPPs Laurel Broten and Donna Cansfield and held at Cloverdale Mall. This gave us another venue to promote our Club to a wider audience and, I think, it is worth our continued participation in future years.

Thanks to the work of members of the Executive as well as other club members, the following three initiatives were undertaken with the goal of ensuring we continue to move forward and are responsive to members' needs and the changing on-line world.

A major undertaking was designing and conducting a member survey. This was done under the leadership of Shelley Pringle. We used the services of Survey Monkey to deliver the survey on-line to those members who had email addresses. Where members did not have email addresses, hard copy surveys were mailed and those results were manually tabulated. The survey questions and results can be found elsewhere in the President's Red Book.

Ensuring the privacy of our members' information became important as we are putting increasing information on-line. We, therefore, established a Privacy Policy that now appears on our Website.

Decisions were made that will result in changes to our newsletter beginning with the September 2013 issue. The newsletter will be redesigned to make it reader friendly on a variety of electronic devices. The content will recognize that links to Ontario Council, CFUW National and IFUW can provide much of the information that has previously been printed in our own publication. As well, the increasing costs of printing and postage have required us to begin charging those members who want to continue receiving a mailed hard copy of the newsletter – this is in line with what many other CFUW Clubs and other organizations are doing. Starting in September 2013, the fee will be \$10.

Advocacy is a cornerstone of CFUW and it is our Issues Group under the leadership of Peggy Pinkerton that addresses this. Elsewhere in the President's Red Book there are copies of letters sent to local politicians this year: issues included the Gun Registry, Canada's Access to Medicines Regime (CAMR) and Aboriginal Education. As well, we were invited by Kirsty Duncan MP Etobicoke North to discuss our letter on Aboriginal Education.

Avery Fleming has continued as our Club's representative on the Toronto Caucus. With their leadership, the issue of Affordable Child Care and Early Learning will become an area of focus for us in our future advocacy efforts.

There are two projects I would like to pursue next year. Firstly, I think we need a new Executive position to coordinate communications with our members. Secondly, I think we need a Benevolent Committee to contact members in need. I will bring both these matters to the Executive in the fall.

I want to thank the members of Executive Committee for their work and their support this year. Especial thanks to Barb Willoughby, Past President, for her guidance and advice and to Shelley Pringle, Vice President, for her enthusiasm, ideas and expertise as we move forward.

Submitted by:
Pat Ferbyack