



LEAF MANITOBA

2009 – 2010

Annual Report

Women's Legal Education & Action Fund Manitoba Annual Report 2009 – 2010

An annual report offers an opportunity to pause in a hectic schedule to focus on the organization's work during the past twelve months and the "fit" with the overall mission and desired direction. The report and the annual meeting present, also, an opportunity for accountability to members and other supporters – the "shareholders" of the corporation.

The LEAF Manitoba Board Directors welcomes the opportunity to report on and discuss our work during the 2009 – 2010 year

What is LEAF Manitoba?

LEAF Manitoba is the provincial Branch of a national voluntary sector non-profit organization, which advances the equality of women and girls in Canada, through strategic litigation, law reform, and education, based on the Canadian Charter of Rights & Freedoms.



Who is LEAF Manitoba?

LEAF Manitoba is...

- Individual and organizational members
- Individual and corporate donors
- Individual and work group volunteers, including:
- A volunteer Board of Directors responsible for ensuring the work is done ethically, effectively, accountably (and we hope, with common sense, compassion and humor!)

- As you are aware we are a volunteer-based Branch. Our Board functions both as a governance board and as unpaid staff. It is essential that each Board Director assume a task in addition to the shared governance responsibilities. Ongoing work groups include Youth Outreach and "Breakfast." Ad hoc work groups are formed as needed to address legal issues and special events. General outreach, education and networking are shared. Volunteers will be welcome in all areas but are needed in fundraising, membership development, Library and administrative tasks.

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Accountability to You

LEAF Manitoba welcomes the opportunity to report to our members and other supporters. We work on your behalf. Only with your participation and active support can we move forward on our shared vision of substantive equality for women and girls, the achievement of true equality for all peoples, and, a time when organizations such as LEAF are no longer needed. We share the journey with you.

As you know, the most important role of any Board of Directors is the collective responsibility for “good governance” in support of the organization’s vision and mission. The annual report and the annual meeting are components of governance accountability. We invite your recommendations and questions.

Succession

As many of you are aware, since LEAF Manitoba was first established, it has been a completely volunteer driven organization. Because there were no paid staff, Board Directors, in addition to their governance role, assumed the roles of unpaid staff. As reported last year, the core groups of volunteers who have sustained the Branch, including supporting other volunteers, has been preparing for retirement. **Succession Planning** is continuing. If you or any of your friends and colleagues have governance experience, share LEAF Manitoba’s vision and goals, and are interested in joining our Board, please contact us.

Financial Capacity

Also, recognizing that in today’s economic climate, it is unlikely that there will be individuals willing or able to make the time and skills commitment of the current group, attention has been given to increasing the **financial resource capacity** of LEAF Manitoba. For program development and continuity and for infrastructure stability, this is essential.

How have we addressed the challenge of increased support? We are doing this in 4 ways:

1. We established the W.I.S.E. endowment at the Winnipeg Foundation. This provides Manitobans with the opportunity to make long term commitment to the equality of women and girls. This ensures, also, in Manitoba an ongoing relevant presence dedicated to equality advancement and the non erosion of advancements achieved.
2. We responded successfully to the timely announcement of a Manitoba Law Foundation funding program.
3. We have built a small reserve of dollars not requiring charitable receipts (until the establishment of the endowment, all dollars requiring charitable receipts had to go to the national office). Rather than spend these dollars as they were received, the Board decided to continue a considerable amount of volunteer based work and retain these dollars until they grew to a size with potential impact.
4. We are proceeding with an application for a charitable number for LEAF Manitoba so that we can issue charitable tax receipts for donations in support of Manitoba programs.

These 4 steps address, also, an informal survey of donors where 100% of those contacted expressed concern that all money raised in Manitoba was being forwarded to the national office in Toronto.

How is it Working?

1. Despite the financial downturn, the **W.I.S.E.** endowment is growing. There have been 149 donations to date. These include several substantial ongoing commitments. With the improvement in the economy, we look forward to increased support. Thanks go out to all who have contributed!

To assist in the preparation of a fund development plan, on the advice of experts in the field, our Board contracted for a limited survey of the fundraising environment. Because the 18 responses were so diverse, it was decided that once time and other resources allow, the focus will be on a more comprehensive and inclusive outreach and development process. Hindsight is 20/20.

If effective fundraising is your interest and expertise, please let us know. As you will understand, in order to make available program dollars of approximately \$50,000, the endowment will have to reach the \$1,000,000 level. A more “workable” level of \$100,000 would require an endowment of \$2,000,000. It is a challenge!

2. **The Manitoba Law Foundation** responded positively to our funding request and granted a \$50,000 annual grant for 3 years. The Board chose to contract for program development and some administrative support. As is the case with the “best made plans”, moving forward has presented some unanticipated challenges. In order to ensure good management and optimal effective use of these limited dollars, we have chosen to move more slowly than planned and may be able to extend the use of these granted dollars a bit beyond the 3 year period.
3. The “reserve” has grown to a size where we can now augment the cost of the programs supported by the Law Foundation and can look at strengthening our legal work. We recognize, also, that responsible management dictates the development and retention of an operating reserve. Dollars are required, also, to address our provincial mandate.
4. Our application for a charitable number is in process.

As you know, the Ethical Fundraising and Accountability Code, a Donor Bill of Rights and the Code of Ethical Principles and Standards form part of our financial and accountability framework. This year, to increase our expertise in this area, two women with financial backgrounds joined our Board. Also, Directors have attended workshops on good governance, on Canada Revenue Agency requirements, risk management, and on developmental approaches.

Policy

Policy development has continued in Volunteer Involvement, Directors leave of absence, and a number of applicable policies developed at the national level. Our Diversity policy continues to frame our work and requires ongoing vigilance and review.

Infrastructure/Office

As a component of the **infrastructure development**, we have now leased an **office** and will be moving out of the space donated for so many years by our Board Chair. Locating an office took considerably more time than anticipated because of the limited availability of accessible space at a reasonable price. At the moment, we are on a furniture search. Once there is a place for you to sit, you’ll be invited to view your new venue!

Now on to Program Development and Delivery.

Putting the “E” in LEAF – Education, Outreach, Community Connections

In our education programs, whether adult or youth, LEAF Manitoba values a transformative approach in which knowledge and experience are shared between “teacher and learner” and both grow in awareness and understanding and in ability to work for equality. Our goals include:

- To advance constitutional principles of equality, including the connection with human rights and international legal standards.
- To empower communities and individuals to assert their rights.
- To identify important equality issues facing women and girls in Manitoba and to work with community partners to advance Charter and human rights issues
- To increase understanding of LEAF’s work and its relevance to our lives.

The Manitoba Law Foundation grant has supported our contracting for development of our education programs, an important investment by the Foundation.

Outreach to Youth – A Priority

No Means No – This program, originally developed by West Coast LEAF, is based on an actual Supreme Court case addressing the issue of “consent”. The Court held that no one has the right to sexually touch another unless that person clearly communicates consent. There is no such thing as implied consent. Silence, inaction, or ambiguous conduct is not consent. It is a myth that no means maybe, try again, or persuade me. The Court stated that this understanding of consent is necessary to safeguard everyone’s personal autonomy and bodily integrity.

Because the actual case involved a young woman, participants in the program soon learn the relevance to their lives. The program is delivered in 3 one hour workshops and is geared mainly to grade 7 to 9 grade levels. It can be delivered in schools or in the community. The LEAF Manitoba facilitators are young persons who receive “training” and support. They volunteer their time. Several training sessions have been held. We now have 13 facilitators, all of whom evidence an enthusiastic, responsible, sensitive, and committed approach to their involvement. It is obvious that they view this as an important program through which they contribute to the development of young people’s understanding of the true meaning of equality.

The workshops focus on rights and responsibilities with regard to consent and assault. Students are encouraged to critically examine social conventions, myths and gender stereotypes, the use and abuse of power, the continuum of violence, and the distorted notions of what “consent” is. These topics as well as the legal implications, particularly with regard to sexual assault, are explored through discussion, and role-playing scenarios where stereotypes and prejudice can create vulnerabilities to violence.

A considerable amount of the paid contractor’s time went to adapting the West Coast manual and related documents to ensure relevance to Manitoba, outreach for volunteers, several facilitator training sessions, outreach to the schools, and organizing the presentation of several workshops. As of March, 7 workshops have been held. The feedback and evaluation forms will be reviewed with the participation of the facilitators. Any relevant adjustments in training and or in workshop content and presentation will be made.

Youth in the Workplace – This program, also originated by West Coast LEAF reflects a context and approach similar to No Means No. It is under development in Manitoba.

Youth Conference - The Power of Equality

On May 4th, 2009, this challenging title brought together high school students and community activists to explore equality issues at the individual and community levels. Areas addressed included the use and abuse of power, the continuum of violence, the impact of stereotypes, the real meaning of “consent” and personal autonomy. Presenters at the morning panel included Lorena Fontaine, Aboriginal Governance University of Winnipeg, Shannon Sampert, Department of Politics University of Winnipeg, Gillian Roy, Teen Talk educator, and Allison Fenske, Lawyer and LEAF Manitoba Board member.

Small group discussions reviewed media messages within the context presented by the panelists and prepared collages depicting negative and positive messages for sharing with each other.

Following a delicious lunch, a panel of women involved in social change activities encouraged young women to consider positive action directed to equality advancement. Panelists included Brenlee Carrington Trepel, Equity Ombudsperson, Law Society, Doreen Demas, Director First Nations Disability Association, Jennifer Montebruno, Canadian Red Cross, Shimby Zegeye-Begehiuot, University of Winnipeg student.

Next on the Agenda, the “Sisters in a Circle”: Empowerment Through Dance workshop with Angela Busby of Illuminari, a special opportunity for those in attendance, was a great success.

The day concluded with a celebratory cake and toasts to equality and each other.

Thanks to the presenters and to the wonderful staff at the lovely University Women’s Club. The graciousness and friendliness of Janice, Lisa and other staff and the beauty of the venue made this a truly special experience.

Thanks also to the work group and facilitators Audrey Young, Sue Irving, Amelia Curran, Allison Fenske, Kalen Schick, Karen Dana, Natalie Carrero, Noreen Demeria, Paula Leslie, Buchi Nnadi, Jennifer Nemhard, Accalia Robertson, Cael Rollins, Lindsay Stevenson, Carman Yerex, and Gillian and Shimby (also presenters).

The young women told us:

I learned today.....

...what feminism is

...yes means yes

...feminism = equality

...books and facilities that can't be used by disabled people = inequality

...the difference between sexual assault and sexual harassment

...there are issues both local and international

...so much, I realize equal treatment doesn't necessarily mean the same treatment

...I can be powerful

...the conference is the best one I've been to

...would love to come back next year

...I learned a lot that will help me face the world

...location gorgeous! Fantastic!

...food: yummy!

When I leave here, I can...

- ...tell friends about the conference, educate others
- ...take knowledge to my school
- ...tell my boyfriend
- ...get involved in more community service
- ...initiate action
- ...fight for equality, treat everyone fairly < dance
- ...be the change within yourself
- ...start to contribute to the feminist movement
- ...be proud of who I am
- ...continue to try to be a leader in my community as a young woman, a human rights activist and a disabled person!
- ...follow a path to become a "humanist" lawyer! I finally decided today so thank you for that!

Transforming Our Future

Growing amounts of qualitative and quantitative research indicate that legal empowerment has helped poverty alleviation, good governance and other development goals. In a legal empowerment approach, lawyers work with community as partners instead of dominating them as proprietors of expertise. Addressing community priorities frequently requires lawyers to involve non-judicial strategies that transcend narrow notions of legal systems. The use of law is often just part of integrated strategies that include other development activities.

This approach forms part of the context of our Transforming Our Future program an adult education program, originally developed by West Coast LEAF. Again, a considerable amount of the paid contractor's time has gone to adapting program materials to ensure they are Manitoba relevant. This program engages community groups, non lawyers, in learning about Canada's equality rights, as framed by the Charter, and in developing the skills and strategies necessary to take action on the issues. The program is designed to allow for much discussion and critical plain language analysis of legal concepts and theories, with a goal of positive change and shared learning. The experiences, concerns, and knowledge of community participants, in turn, will ensure LEAF's litigation, law reform and education work continues to be relevant and dynamic.

The program is delivered by lawyers who have received "training" on the content and process. A challenge for the contractor has been arranging the 2 day workshops at times when lawyers can make themselves available. To date, workshops have been delivered to 2 community groups. Although this is a limited "sample", review of the feedback and consideration of possible adaptation will occur. Moving forward on our contacts with the Aboriginal community remains a priority.

You must be the change you wish to see in the world

Mahatma Gandhi

Communications Strategy

The development of a more effective communication strategy is an important component of LEAF Manitoba's development; it has relevance for all aspects of our work. In this regard, we have contracted for development of a LEAF Manitoba website and for renewal of the LEAF Manitoba newsletter. Also, a group of young volunteers is meeting to develop recommendations with regard to a strategy that would resonate with youth.

Annual Meeting 2008/09

The annual meeting is a time for accountability, discussion, learning, socializing and recommitting to the advancement of equality. On June 23rd, 2009, the 2008/09 membership meeting was held in the attractive board room at Thompson Dorfman Sweatman. We thank the firm, in particular Allison Fenske, for their hospitality.



Celeste McKay & Betty Hopkins

Following the round (oval) table attention to the annual reports, Celeste McKay spoke about the importance and status

of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Celeste, a former LEAF Manitoba Board member, has a Bachelor of Social Work degree as well as a LL.B and LL.M. She has worked in the areas of human rights, policy, research and advocacy, primarily on behalf of Indigenous women's organizations. Currently, she works as a Consultant in national and international areas related to Indigenous Peoples, often representing the Native Women's Association of Canada. Celeste's education and experience provide the contextual understanding of the importance of this Declaration. Making time in her busy schedule to share this with LEAF Manitoba members is reflective of her commitment to the advancement of equality. We thank Celeste and her young son Evan for this gift of sharing!



Annual Meeting

Retiring Board members Lucia Jofre and Paula Leslie were thanked for their contributions to the work of LEAF Manitoba. Although they have left the Board, they continue as valued members and supporters.

New Directors Amelia Curran, Kate Dobie, Bev Froese and Jan Perchal were welcomed. Each spoke briefly of their various involvements and their reasons for joining the Board.

The meeting concluded with reading a Maya Angelou poem "A Women Should Have..." and the distribution of copies of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, volunteer and membership forms, information on the work at the national level, and announcements of other community events.



Paula Leslie, Betty Hopkins & Lucia Jofre

Copies of these documents and LEAF Manitoba Reports are available to you.

Connections for Equality

“Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home—so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any map of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person, the neighbourhoods we live in, the school or colleges we attend. Such are the places where every man, woman or child seek equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerted citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world.”

Eleanor Roosevelt

Yes, I hear you – she is American; however, as Virginia Woolf said “As a woman, my country is the world”. We agree with Eleanor (and with Virginia).

In Manitoba, Many organizations work to ensure that human rights and equality have meaning in the lives of all citizens, in particular, in the lives of women and girls. These organizations work with, and on behalf of, those in positions of vulnerability and disadvantage. They work to remove barriers to participation in, and contribution to, all this country has to offer. LEAF Manitoba is proud to be part of this community. Linkages are limited only by time and people resources. We know that together we are stronger.

The reality is that much of the time of these important groups is focused on fundraising for survival of their work. Little time is left to maximize their potential synergistic and collaborative impact for positive social change. They do, however, as much as possible, come together to identify issues and possible strategies. Perhaps because of the stress of the many demands, the coming together frequently is celebratory, recognizing each other and advances made.

Although we can not cite all the relevant involvements and activities, we do go into some detail in this report. We do this to ensure our members are aware of involvement opportunities available to them, and to give the National Board and office and other Branches a glimpse into the equality issues and work of Manitoba women.

- As usual, the fiscal year begins with annual meeting/accountability sessions. As much as possible, we try to have a supportive presence.
- An important focus at some of these meetings, during the year, has been the Women’s Health Clinic work on the development of a new Manitoba Women’s Health Strategy. In partnership with Manitoba Health and Healthy Living, the Manitoba Advisory Council (Status of Women) and the Prairie Women’s Health Centre of Excellence, W.H.C. conducted consultations in all regions of Manitoba. LEAF Members may want to obtain a copy of the Report.

Congratulations to the Women’s Health Clinic and the Manitoba government on their commitment to the establishment of the Birth Centre!

- Reflecting the importance of this work and the excellent documents produced by the Centre of Excellence and the W.H.C., Betty participated in organizing the Provincial Council of Women session “Building Women’s Health on an Equity Foundation – Analysis and Action”. The Executive Directors of the Centre and of W.H.C. made excellent presentations, emphasizing the need for collaborative action – a renewal of the “women’s movement”. The E.D. of W.H.C., Joan Dawkins is a lawyer and former Board Director of the LEAF National Board and of LEAF Manitoba.

- LEAF Manitoba Board member, Beatrice Watson, continues to keep us informed about and involved with the **Manitoba Immigrant Women’s Association**, where she is President, and with the **Manitoba Branch of the Congress of Black Women** where she is a member of the Board. Throughout the year, I.W.A.M. has held workshops for adults and youth and a multicultural event in the fall and in the spring. LEAF members have attended also I.W.A.M.’s “late lunch” information sessions. The Congress, in May, held a 2 day Arts and Cultural Festival, in October their 11th annual Unity dinner, and in February, during Black History month, a cultural awareness workshop. Beatrice also publishes an excellent newsletter on related issues and activities.
- The Manitoba Women’s Advisory Council, as part of the reorganized Status of Women, continues to hold periodic “Lunch and Learn” sessions. The topics included Trafficking, the Office of the Fairness Commissioner, eating disorders, A Gender Equality Body at the U.N., Mental Health, Early Sexualization. We draw your attention to 2 others.
 - In April, Reece Lagartera of the Rainbow LGBTTT resource centre made an excellent presentation “Issues, Barriers and Celebrations for Sexual and Gender Minorities”. A considerable amount of information was crowded into a short time. The Rainbow Centre is providing an important service and advocacy role. LEAF members may want to learn more about this.
 - In November, representatives of the Family Violence Prevention Branch and Victims Services provided a comprehensive and relevant session on “Family Violence and the Workplace: It’s Everybody’s Business”. Excellent materials are available.
- During the year, the Council hosted 2 Roundtable Discussions and Information Sharing sessions. You may recall that we were involved in beginning these. The initial focus was on the needs of young women in relation to violence. Currently, the focus is more general. If you want copies of information on any of these sessions, please call us or the Advisory Council.
- In April, we were invited to a meet and greet event at the opening of the 27th annual Federal/Provincial/Territorial meeting of Ministers responsible for the Status of Women. This year’s meeting was hosted by Minister Nancy Allan.
- In April, the federal status of women announced 2 grants of relevance to women’s equality.
 - \$100,000 to the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs for their project “Human Trafficking: Stop the Sexual Exploitation of First Nations Women and Children” and \$20,860 to Community Living Manitoba for its project “Returning to our Awareness – A Path of Empowerment for Women Caregivers” which will provide support groups for women caring for children with intellectual/developmental disabilities.
- In May, during National Elizabeth Fry Week, Elizabeth Fry Manitoba held several sessions drawing attention to the needs of, and the challenges facing, women caught up in the criminal justice system. In August, Elizabeth Fry organized a march as an expression of sorrow for the deaths of women while in prison.
- In May, at a “Community Advocates Conference”, community advocates came together to discuss effective advocacy. The information shared has relevance for Transforming Our Future, although the presentation approach was different. Areas included administrative tribunals, the varying authorities of legislation, regulations and policies; the right to appeal; preparing for hearings; navigating the system; the strength of the mandate of the ombudsman’s office. Thanks to the organizers!
- In June, one of our Directors represented us at the 8th annual “Keeping the Fires Burning – Honouring Grandmothers: First Teachers and Wisdom Keepers” an important opportunity for our learning.

- UNPAC continues to be an active advocacy group, in particular around “gender budgets” and women’s economic rights and contributions, and through their program “Change Makers: Building Skills, Transforming Communities”. To learn more about the year long program, please call us or UNPAC.
- In June, 2 Directors attended the Winnipeg Foundation “celebrating the spirit and generosity of donors”. This event included a tour of the renovated West End Cultural Centre and an update on the Foundation activities.
- Also, in June, LEAF Manitoba was represented at a Government House reception celebrating the 60th anniversary of the Provincial Council of Women.
- In July, several Directors attended the Provincial Council of Women’s 3rd annual Celebrating Women Gala and Fundraiser. Women recognized were Dianna Bussey – Salvation Army, Sharon Taylor – Wolseley Family Place, Val Noseworthy – Ukrainian Women’s Association in Canada and **Beatrice Watson** – Immigrant Women’s Association. These individuals nominated by their respective organizations contribute to the advancement of equality for all women. Way to go, women! Special way to go, Beatrice!
- As a guest of Cathy Auld, of the Winnipeg Foundation, we were provided with the opportunity to learn more about the works of Creative Retirement and about community development activities in Winnipeg’s “West End”, including the University of Winnipeg’s outreach to community and the work of the Spence Neighbourhood Association.
- In September, an open house was held to update women on the Women’s Hospital Redevelopment Project – an important advancement for women.
- Also in September, members attended the viewing of The ‘R’ Word reminding us all of work remaining to ensure an inclusive society where all are equal and all belong. We urge members to view the film.
- At the Creative Retirement fundraising luncheon in October, we were awed by the enthusiasm, energy, and activities of guest speaker, The Honourable Flora MacDonald as she spoke on “Another Vision of Afghanistan”. We urge you to visit her website www.futuregen.ca Future Generations Canada was founded, and is led by, Flora. It is a grassroots development organization dedicated to the empowerment of the Afghan people.
- The “Bush Ladies”, presented by the Provincial Council of Manitoba and Theatre by the River, reminded us of the challenges faced, and, the courage of, early women settlers “in their own words” excerpts from diaries, letters and books.
- Also in October, several groups working with and on behalf of women with disabilities hosted “My Leaky Body”. “In My Leaky Body, Devaney’s writing talent turns emergency-room neglect into poetry... (She) is one of the few individuals brave enough to complain without blaming. Her courage is raw.” *Heather Mallick (see www.myleakybody.com)*
- Victor Malarek continues to remind us of the horrors of trafficking. In May, we attended the release of his new book “The Johns: Sex for Sale and the Men Who Buy It”. “Following up on his scathing indictment of the international sexual enslavement of women in ‘The Natashas’, Malarek lays bare the other side of the crisis, the men who fuel the demand. He enters the world of the Johns, unmasking the men – and organizations – that foster and drive the sex trade, from America to Europe, Thailand to Russia.”

In November, Victor was the guest speaker and award recipient at the Beyond Borders Media Awards event. Two Board members and one of our youth group volunteers attended this event. The presentations selected for recognition were compelling and well worth seeing. We plan to check as to their availability for viewing.

- LEAF Manitoba participated in Women’s History month at the Legislature, recognizing women judges in the Provincial Court – now 50% of the bench. Judge Susan Devine, recently retired, provided a historical overview – of the journey to this point. A publication with women’s stories is available.
- In November, a presentation by Malalai Joya provided an important perspective on the experiences of women in Afghanistan. Her book “A Women Among Warlords: The Extraordinary Story of an Afghan Who Dared to Raise Her Voice” is an inspiring account of her fight to liberate the people of Afghanistan after 30 years of war.” Although there have been attempts on her life, Malalai continues to speak out about the violence and poverty brought on by years of occupation and corruption. She urges withdrawal of all troops. “We are capable of defending our independence, governing ourselves and determining our own future”. Her book is available.
- In November, many organizations recognized anti-violence month. These reminders (not that reminders were needed) continued on into December. We encourage members to be informed about the work of shelters, resource centres and clinic, important to women experiencing violence or the threat of violence.
 - On December 3rd, in remembrance of Manitobans with intellectual disabilities who have lived and died within institutions, a candlelight ceremony was held at the Legislature.
 - On December 4th, LEAF participated in the Day of Remembrance – Empowerment Fair held at the Union Centre, marking the 20th anniversary of the killing of 14 women at Ecole Polytechnique and remembering all women who have been victims of violence. A memorial service was held; information and resources were shared including the distribution of the excellent 20 days to end violence postcards. We thank the Women’s Committee of the Manitoba Federation of labour for organizing this and for their important research and information materials.
 - On December 6th, many attended the screening of the film “Polytechnique” at the University of Winnipeg and the candlelight vigil at the Women’s Memorial Grove.
 - On December 7th, the Sunrise Memorial was held at the Legislature and PSAC held an event at the Fort Garry Hotel “The Happy Hour in Angry Times”.
 - On December 8th, the Manitoba Network for the Prevention of Abuse of Older Adults launched their website of tools, resources and information.
- On December 9th, at the International Human Rights Day Awards luncheon, the Honourable Philip Lee, Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba was the guest speaker. Awards recipients were Anna Celestrya Carr and Ali Saeed.
- On December 11th, LEAF was represented at a dinner honouring retiring Executive Director Dale Kendel, Community Living Manitoba, a leader in the advancement of rights for persons with intellectual disabilities.
- “The Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination (CMARD)” workshop was held on December 12th. In response to an invitation from the City of Winnipeg’s Citizens Equity Committee, two Board members attended this important workshop. The 3 objectives for the output from the workshop were to draft the Winnipeg Anti-Racism, Discrimination and Hate Crime Strategy; to develop a CMARD Action Plan for Winnipeg; and, to approve the wording of the Winnipeg Declaration on Racism, Discrimination and Hate Crime.

The related initiative was undertaken in 2004 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as a follow up to recommendations emerging from the Third World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance held in Durban South Africa in 2001. Activities are occurring around the world. In Canada the Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination is taking a leading role.

LEAF Manitoba Board member, Dr. Ertrice Eddy, attended the Durban Conference and participated in follow up presentations and discussions. Sadly, much work remains. The action by the Coalition and

the city of Winnipeg offers encouragement. Regular research, monitoring and evaluation are part of the planned actions. We look forward to the report and to the follow up action.

- On December 13th, the Congress of Black Women held the annual Kwanzaa celebration, honouring family, community and culture.
- In January, LEAF joined others in a “meet and greet” with the Honourable Jennifer Howard, recently appointed Minister responsible for the Status of Women.
- Also in January, our Chair joined others at Government House in recognition of the 30th anniversary of MATCH Manitoba. Congratulations, friends at MATCH, for all you do with women around the world!
- In February and March, several workshops and other events were held in recognition of International Women’s Day, including:
 - BPW Winnipeg Central, honouring BPW Women in Ukraine.
 - The 4th annual Grassroots Women Dinner honouring women whose lives are lived in the best of struggles.
 - Anita Neville’s 10th annual Breakfast, with Margo Goodhand, editor of the Free Press, as guest speaker.
 - On March 8th, LEAF volunteers participated in the annual celebration at the Legislative Building. “Milestones in Women’s Equality: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow”, celebrating 40 years since the release of the report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women. Well known and highly regarded activist, June Menzies, and Beverly Goodwin spoke of their years of involvement with and commitment to action on issues impacting on women’s lives.
 - On March 23rd, UNIFEM held its 6th annual Local to Global fundraiser “Take Action: End Violence against Women” with guest speaker Jeannette Corbiere-Lavell.
 - On March 25th, the Nellie McClung Foundation invited LEAF to “Nellie’s Pink Tea”.

“We are faced with a situation that demands immediate action. The time is past when society can infuse to provide community child care service in the hope of dissuading mothers from leaving their children and going to work.”

*Royal Commission on the Status of Women, 1970
(What’s new?)*

*November 20th
marked the 20th
Anniversary of the
UN Convention on
the Rights of the
Child*

*Beijing Declaration Turns 15
The Beijing Declaration and
Platform for Action was
reviewed by the UN
Commission on the Status of
Women from March 1 - 12*

Education – Outreach - Fundraising

Celebrating Equality Day

Once again, thank you to LEAF Manitoba member Pat Lane and Taylor McCaffrey for providing the attractive and comfortable venue for this annual celebratory and fun event. On April 16th, supporters of LEAF Manitoba gathered together for the birthday of LEAF and the equality provisions of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Originating as a fundraiser for this Branch, the event now includes an appreciation of Persons Day Breakfast Patrons and Hosts.

In addition to much visiting and wonderful food provided by LEAF Manitoba member, Rose Flaig, guests were captivated by a comprehensive, informative and moving presentation by Yvonne Peters, social worker, lawyer and activist. Yvonne shared the story of the coming together of the disability community around the world to assist in the drafting of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities signed by the UN in March 2007. Yvonne emphasized the importance of the convention and its relevance to equality in every facet of the lives of women with disabilities. Those in attendance were asked to let the Canadian government know of support for ratification of the Convention. Also important is the signing of the Convention's optional Protocol which will enable persons with disabilities to take their concerns to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Yvonne drew attention to the need for Canada to establish a coordinating mechanism to ensure the full implementation of the rights contained in the Convention. It has been observed by the Manitoba Human Rights Commission that the number of complaints based on disability has been the highest of all grounds since 2000. The numbers grow every year and this is the trend across Canada.

Also circulated at this event was information on the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. People were encouraged to attend the annual meeting to discuss the importance of this document.

Thanks to Debra Parkes, a detailed update on LEAF's legal work was provided – information always welcomed.

Our appreciation goes out to all who made this a successful event.

Persons Day Breakfast 2009

On October 16, 2009, close to 1000 people came together for our **19th annual Persons Day Breakfast**. The topic "The Never Ending Equality Journey: Past Successes and Future Challenges" was addressed by two individuals whose lives reflect extensive experience and commitment to equality for all persons.



Professor Kathleen Mahoney, F.R.S.C., LL.B, LL.M., spoke of the importance of Leaf's work in education and law reform and the impact on Canadian jurisprudence, written law, and on the lives of Canadian women. Outlining Leaf's approach to equality, Kathleen referred to several cases she regards as significant, and spoke of setbacks, current challenges, and the need for ongoing vigilance.

Although the occasion recognized the anniversary of the historic Persons case, it recognized also that the success of that case was limited. Many women, including Aboriginal women, were excluded. The use of law to advance equality for all continues today.

Kathleen then spoke of what she considers to be one of the greatest equality advances – the 2005 residential school agreement developed to address an immense Canadian tragedy often hidden from view.

Kathleen stated that the human rights violations in the residential school system occurred in many areas of law – criminal, civil, human rights, treaty, and equality law.

Through an incredible series of events, guided by principles of equality and restorative justice, a solution has been reached that may be a model for the world. She then spoke to the hard work and commitment, the pain and hurt, progress and setbacks, education and collaboration, the limits of litigation, the importance of negotiation – all leading to the Agreement and to the subsequent establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. She drew attention to the fact that this is the first time a “first world” country has agreed to subject itself to the telling of its terrible history. It is a time of healing for all of us and a challenge to groups such as LEAF.



Former AFN Chief Phil Fontaine spoke of the “sad and tragic, largely unknown chapter in Canada’s history”. He observed that his personal story, discussed publicly in 1999, was not unique but received attention because of his position at the time, Grand Chief. He spoke of the innocent children who were the victims of the residential school system, the pain and suffering, the racism and discrimination, and the negative impact on family functioning and on relationships.

Phil acknowledged the support of many individuals and organizations and stressed the importance of moving forward together. He stressed the opportunity presented by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, chaired by Justice Murray Sinclair of Manitoba. He urged people to join in the conversation, to participate and ensure that all Canadians are involved not only the survivors. He stated that the denial of the truth has impoverished all Canadians and truth telling will begin healing for all of us. Openness and reflection are required. “Don’t be absent from the process”. Together we can solve the challenges of poor and overcrowded housing, hunger, the fact that 100 First Nations communities are without safe drinking water, schools in poor repair, 1300 outstanding land claims, and 27,000 First Nations children in care largely due to poverty. He reminded people that in spite of progress, Canada voted against the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, indicating that Canada continues to pick and choose who has rights.

Phil advised people that the first national meeting of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission will occur this spring in Manitoba. This will be an incredible undertaking, will consider not only sad stories but also good things that have occurred and how we can learn more about ourselves and move forward together. He spoke also of the strong emotion he experienced in the Parliament of Canada when the government issued the historical formal apology.



Following the Breakfast, both speakers generously spent two hours with high school students discussing issues and answering questions. The young people had many questions, were enthusiastic and participative.

Two additional Breakfast happenings – a \$75,000 challenge contribution to the LEAF Manitoba W.I.S.E., Working in Support of Equality endowment!! And the presentation of a National lifetime achievement award to Betty Hopkins by Brenlee Carrington Trepel.

In recognition of the historic event discussed, and in recognition of the two exceptional presenters, LEAF Manitoba presented to each of the schools in attendance a copy of “Restoring the Balance – First Nations Women’s Community and Culture”.

Legal

As most members are aware, LEAF's legal work is managed at the national level by the Board and the Program Development Committee. Analyses and recommendations for priority cases are developed by a National Legal Committee. Although quality control and decision making are centralized, branches may propose cases and recommend committee members. Over the years, LEAF Manitoba has done both. Manitoba undertakes also the important roles of fundraising for, and educating about, the national legal role. We also develop liaisons with other organizations with regard to equality issues important to Manitoba women – issues that may link, eventually to potential litigation. By sharing this information with other branches and with the National Board, we broaden their knowledge base with regard to Manitoba women. In particular, we focus on the social and legal interconnections and the impact each has on the other.

As so much related activity occurs in Manitoba, we can give members only a glimpse into the important work. If any of you are involved in related areas about which you think we should be aware, please contact us. Within the reality of our resources, we support, and cooperate with, others who work to advance social and legal justice.

What are some of the priorities in Manitoba?

- As members are aware, a priority for many individuals and organizations is the social and legal change required to advance equality **and justice for Aboriginal peoples**. To be of any support in this regard, it is imperative that we listen to, and learn from, the voices of First Nations and Métis peoples. At our annual meeting, and at our equality day event, we encouraged awareness of the important U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Our Persons Day Breakfast focused on the importance of the Residential School Agreement and the establishment of the **Truth and Reconciliation Commission**, referred to by our speakers as one of the most important equality advances in Canada's story. With Justice Murray Sinclair as Chair, the first national meeting of the Commission is planned for June in Winnipeg. As the office will be in Winnipeg, you will have the opportunity to be involved in important discussions.
 - At a presentation by Justice Sinclair at the University of Winnipeg, on display were quilts created by individuals who attended residential schools and who used this art form to express hurt and survival. The message is a strong one.
 - As I write this report, an invitation has arrived to attend the open house at the Commission's new office on April 8th. The three Commissioners will be there to meet Manitobans – Justice Sinclair, Chief Wilton Littlechild and Marie Wilson.
 - We urge you to become involved in this historic opportunity.

A letter from Jeannette Corbiere Lavell, Chair of the Native Women's Association of Canada outlines four major areas important to the advancement of Aboriginal women:

- The need for immediate action with regard to violence against Aboriginal women and the fact that, in the last 3 decades, more than 520 women are missing or murdered.
- Action by the federal government as follow up to the direction given regarding section 6 of the Indian Act as a result of Sharon McIvor's work for the rights and status of Aboriginal women and children.
- The issue of matrimonial property rights and the rights of divorced, separated and widowed Aboriginal women living on the reserve.

- The need for the Canadian government to sign the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

This letter written in support of LEAF’s work goes into to more detail and is available. Also, the organizations Mother of Red Nations and Ka Ni Kanichihk can be contacted for more information. We recommend to you also the book “Restoring the Balance First Nations Women, Community, and Culture”.

- Another area with important connections to law and justice for all peoples is the right to **economic security**. In Manitoba, the “make poverty history” movement is an important focus for several organizations, including the Provincial Council of Women. In this regard, members are encouraged to review the provincial government’s “All Aboard” poverty reduction strategy and the CCPA Manitoba’s “the view from here”. Also, the Provincial Council of Women’s AGM May 8th will focus on “Women and the Economy- Beyond the Perimeter”. With regard to related law, many of Canada’s international commitments are relevant. In Canada, the potential of Section 7 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms has yet to be realized.

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of the person and the right not to be deprived therefore except in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice.

- In Manitoba, there is a strong community working for the **rights of persons with disabilities**. As outlined by Yvonne Peters at our Equality Day event, an important milestone resulting from work at the local, national and international levels occurred in March 2007 when the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was signed at the United Nations. I know that following Yvonne’s presentation, members of LEAF Manitoba joined others urging government support of this Declaration. You will be happy to hear that the Canadian government has ratified the Convention. To quote Marie White, Chairperson of CCD nationally, on March 11th, 2010, “The CRPD is not simply another well-intentioned declaration without any teeth. It requires the Government of Canada to act and monitor progress in achieving the commitments of the treaty. Canada’s actions to create a more accessible and inclusive society will be the subject of both domestic and international scrutiny. Today we celebrate, at the international level, Canadian leadership on disability issues but tomorrow we get down to work on the domestic agenda of removing barriers that prohibit the full and equal participation of Canadians with disabilities.” Some concern has been expressed about the Canadian government’s stated reservation about the Convention’s commitment to ensuring substitute decision making is truly a last resort. Community advocates will be addressing this issue.

In Manitoba, the Disabilities Issues Office is developing a new provincial disability strategy. The discussion papers “Opening Doors: Manitoba’s Commitment to Persons with Disabilities” has been circulated as a base for community consultations. In February, in partnership with DAWN, Disabled Women’s Network Manitoba, a consultation was held with women with disabilities. We look forward to learning from the results of the consultations. One of the many areas covered by the consultation is the consideration of Manitoba’s developing an accessibility Disability Act similar to Ontario’s. If you wish to participate in the consultations you can obtain a copy of the discussion paper and the current “Full Citizenship: A Manitoba Provincial Strategy on Disability”. Although much work remains, the provincial government is acknowledged for its work to advance the rights of persons with disabilities. The real heroes are the many individuals and organizations that continue to insist that they will accept nothing less than full citizenship, full personhood of all persons with disabilities.

From a legal perspective, the work of the **Public Interest Law Centre** in this area is exemplary. Their research and action related to deinstitutionalization and the right to community living is one potentially life changing example. Also they prepared for Barrier Free Manitoba a report on the “Analysis of

- Impressive community advocacy is occurring also for the **rights of persons with mental illness**. The producers of the DVD “The Way We See It” encourage groups to view the video and discuss the implications for change needed in Manitoba. Related documents recommended include “Towards Recovery and Well Being” (*January 2009*) produced by the Mental Health Commission of Canada. The Commission was founded in 2007 as a result of the report “Out of the Shadows at Last” (*2006*). Our Board will be arranging a session. If you want to join us, just call.

The Provincial government also is developing a mental health strategic plan. Manitoba is one of 5 cities involved in a \$110 million 5 year study of mental health and homelessness. Canada’s first mental health crisis centre is to be built near the Health Science Centre. To learn more about this area, members of the Provincial Council of Women’s mental health committee are well informed speakers.

- A priority for LEAF Manitoba is strengthening our **capacity for legal work**. With the changing economic, political, and social environment a solely national focus is not enough. Related to this is the re-establishing of our legal committee/resource group. Co-Chairs Bev Froese and Kristine Barr will be giving attention to this. Two important variables are the new “working together” within LEAF agreement and obtaining our own charitable number and the capacity to fundraise for needed staff support. The Manitoba Law Foundation grant is also important in strengthening the component of LEAF Manitoba’s work. If you are interested in participating in building an “**Equality Agenda**”, please join this **work group**.
- One of the important related activities has been participation in the UNPAC “**Manitoba Equality Report Card 2010**”. Although the time limit did not allow the level of consultation we would have preferred, we were able to develop the following recommendations:

LEAF Manitoba...

1. recommends that the provincial government increase Legal Aid funding to improve access to justice and promote equality, for instance by (1) increasing income cut-offs to allow more people to qualify for and receive legal assistance, and (2) expanding the Legal Aid tariff to include more legal matters that have a particular impact on women, for example in the areas of family law and protection orders.
2. recommends that the provincial government fund a Comprehensive Women’s Legal Clinic to provide legal advice and representations specifically in the areas of domestic violence, family law and criminal law.
3. urges the provincial government to press the federal government to restore the Court Challenges Program – an important access to justice program that supports the equality rights of all peoples, not only those with the financial resources to assert their rights.

also urges the provincial government to develop and implement a provincial Court Challenges Program supporting access to justice for all Manitobans – making the Charter of Rights and Freedoms “real”.
4. urges the provincial government to establish a grants program in support of legal education such as that provided via the youth and adult education programs of LEAF Manitoba.
5. urges the provincial government to develop a plan within a substantive equality analysis based on the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms to address equality issues of women in

positions of particular vulnerability, including First Nations women, women with disabilities, immigrant women, women in the sex trade, women prisoners and homeless women.

6. urges the provincial government to report on implementation of the recommendations contained in the June 2006 Manitoba Association of Women and the Laws “Twenty Years Later Has the Charter Made a Difference”.
7. urges the provincial government to support ratification of the UN Convention on The Rights of Persons with Disabilities and The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Copies of the Report Card, which incorporate several of our recommendations, are available. Reinforced by our involvement in this process is the need for our work group to develop and implement a strategy to consult, review, and prioritize the legal/social issues of importance to Manitoba women at the grassroots, service providers, legal practitioners, research and policy levels, and the implications for LEAF’s work, including the required staff support.

- One of the ongoing challenges discussed at our group is the status of women caught up in the criminal justice system. In this regard, members of the work group and our Board met to review and discuss the tragic story of Ashley Smith’s life and death in Canada’s “correctional” system. Broadening the discussion is planned.
- Also planned is an opportunity to discuss the mental health related activities referenced in this report.
- Forwarded to members of our resource group were 2 requests. We are unaware of the follow up but look forward to the results.
 - A call from the Women’s Court for papers “rewriting Andrews/Reconsidering Kapp”.
 - A call from Fem. Prof for a practising lawyer to work on a pro bono basis for a Charter based injunction against the repeal of the federal long – gun registry.
- It is too early to assess whether the current Legal Help Centre initiative will have implications for the work of LEAF Manitoba. “The Legal Help Centre of Winnipeg is an initiative that arose out of findings of *Making the law Work for Everyone* a report of the United Nations Commission on Legal Empowerment of the Poor. The Commission on Legal Empowerment of the Poor focused on the relationship between exclusion, poverty and the law. The report found that improving access to legal, political and social service systems can be a way to free economically disadvantaged individuals from poverty. The vision of the Legal Help Centre is to assist economically disadvantaged members of our community to access and exercise their legal and social rights.” Members are encouraged to read the related United Nations report.
- In November, the Faculty of Law, as part of their Distinguished Visitors Series, invited the LEAF Litigation Director, Joanna Birenbaum, to speak on “The Niguab in the Courtroom! Litigating for Women’s Equality in a Sexual Assault Case”. This event offered the opportunity for several LEAF Manitoba Board members to attend and to meet Joanna. We arranged also for a small gathering to discuss, briefly, Joanna’s and LEAF’s current legal work.
- The National Board Annual Report will go into detail about the 2009/10 legal work including cases such as *Micmac Nations of Gespeg v Canada*, *Withler v Canada*, *RVN.S.*, *Alberta v Caron* – briefs in the areas of Pay Equity (The Public Sector Equitable Compensation Act), the Canadian Human Rights Commission’s proposed Canadian Human Rights Report Card, the review of S13 of the Canadian Human Rights Act.

A National Organization

At the national level, LEAF's work is increasing. The National Board 2009/10 Annual Report will elaborate on national programs, activities, people and financial resources. This Report will be available to LEAF Manitoba members. Of note is the fact that in spite of the financial downturn, support for national work has allowed some increase in staffing. We look forward to hearing about the impact of the substantial grant from the Ontario Trillium and the Royal Bank foundations. Although we anticipate that most of the related development is likely to occur in Ontario, we hope there will be "spin off" benefits to other parts of the organization. We look forward also to an update on the national Court Monitoring Project funded, in part, by the Manitoba Law Foundation.

The National Report will refer, also, to the development of new "working together" agreements. As has been discussed in previous reports and at annual meetings, it has been agreed that the impact of LEAF's work nationally and provincially can be strengthened by LEAF Manitoba's obtaining our own charitable number. This change in status will be reflected in the agreement. Although the process has taken longer than anticipated, we value the shared commitment to making it happen, in particular, the assistance of National (*former*) Chair Kim Brooks. As has been noted by many, establishing an effective across Canada organization/movement presents challenge and opportunity. Commitment to the vision of substantive equality for all women and girls demands that we work to maximize the opportunity and meet the challenge in a way that values and builds on our diversity, and makes equality theory a lived reality for women and girls, our communities, our country, - and, our organization. Work at all levels of LEAF – local, provincial, national must occur synergistically if we are to advance equality in a substantive way.

Being part of a national organization offers the benefit of working with other "branches". We look forward to increased opportunities, as noted in the national strategic plan. LEAF Manitoba has benefited from our relationship with the West Coast LEAF branch (Affiliate under their new agreement). West Coast LEAF obtained its charitable number at the same time as did the national organization. Consequently, it became financially independent and established a strong staffing component and important educational and legal programs. West Coast staff and Board have been instrumental in the development of Manitoba programs. Once again, we express our appreciation.

As the national report is likely to indicate, current national priorities include strategic planning and 25th Anniversary celebrations. If your preferred involvement is at the national level, please let us know.

Women's World 2011, an international and interdisciplinary gathering of women, will be held July 3rd to 7th, 2011 in Ottawa- Gatineau. The theme of this global conference is "Inclusions, Exclusions, Seclusions, Living in a Globalized World".

The website www.womensworld.ca offers an opportunity to discuss globalization and women's equality.

It is impossible to realize our goals while discriminating against half the human race. As study after study has taught us, there is no tool for development more effective than the empowerment of women.

Kofi Annan, Then UN Secretary - General 2006

Acknowledging & Appreciating Women

Throughout this report, we have touched on a few of the community events held to acknowledge and express thanks to women for their contributions to the advancement of equality. In this section, we will recognize several others. It is impossible to name the many who every day add to the quality of our lives. In a June article in the Winnipeg Free Press, Margo Goodhand asked “Where have all the visionaries gone?” We know where they are, and the list is endless!

This year we lost one of our long time supporters, Irene Elizabeth Grant, O.M. Because Irene was such a leader in the advancement of women’s rights and because her story is an important part of our story and the barriers overcome, we are including an excerpt from the tribute developed by her daughter.

In memory of another long time LEAF supporter Eira “Babs” Friesen, the YMCA-YWCA of Winnipeg and the Manitoba Women’s Advisory Council established the Eira “Babs” Friesen Lifetime Achievement Award, for which the community can nominate women who have demonstrated courage and persistence in contributing to women’s equality. The award will form part of the Women of Distinction process and celebration.

We extend our sympathy to the Caribbean and Black women’s communities, as they experienced the loss of 6 women in a period of 3 months, and to Kemlin and Jennifer Nemhard at the loss of their mother, Pauline. Over the years, Kemlin and Jennifer have been valued volunteers with LEAF Manitoba. The death of Dr. Claudia Wright was also a loss to all who work for equality.

On a happier note, we acknowledge Gail Asper not only for her support of our work but also for her “super woman” efforts that brought to fruition the Canadian Human Rights Museum dream, right here in Winnipeg Manitoba. Gail has gained worldwide recognition!

This year, as part of the preparation for the 25th anniversary, the national office called for nominations of lawyers who have contributed to the advancement of equality. Betty Hopkins and Debra Parkes were happy to nominate Manitoba Law Professor, Karen Busby, and Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies Executive Director, Kim Pate, as exemplary candidates for recognition. The Manitoba Branch nominated, also, four other wonderful women Alison Brewin, Executive Director of West Coast LEAF, Brenlee Carrington Trepel, former LEAF Manitoba Board member and Law Society Ombudsperson, Fiona Sampson, former LEAF litigation Director and Executive Director of Lawyers Abroad, and Yvonne Peters, remarkable activist in many equality advancing areas. These women may be well known to you; if not, you will want to learn more about their contributions and their vision.

On March 25th, we joined many others at the Legislative dining room to celebrate Madeline Bosco’s vast contributions to women’s health. Madeline’s commitment is outstanding. It was obvious in the testimonials that she is highly regarded and will be greatly missed as she leaves Manitoba, the Women’s Health Clinic, and the Canadian Women’s Health Network to become the Executive Director at Vancouver’s Reach Community Health Centre. We know Madeline will be a wonderful new resource for West Coast LEAF. Thank you, Madeline, and look out British Columbia!

The remarkable persistence and commitment of Sharon McIvor to the rights and status of Aboriginal women and children is acknowledged with great respect. For two decades, Sharon pursued the redress of discrimination against Aboriginal women in the Indian Act. The British Columbia Court of Appeal heard her case and declared that Section 6 of the Indian Act infringes the equality rights guaranteed by Section 15 of the Charter and cannot be saved by Section 1. Parliament has been given a deadline of April 6, 2010 to amend the Act. Many people are waiting for results. There is concern that the B.C. decision was too narrow; however, the Supreme Court refused to hear an appeal in this regard from Sharon.

During the year, Board members Allison Fenske and Anne Turner left the Board. We miss them and extend our appreciation for their contributions



IRENE ELIZABETH GRANT, O.M. Born on her family farm near Niverville on February 10, 1914, she survived the original swine flu in 1918 to go on to a life dedicated to education and equality of all people, especially women.

As a young lady, living on the farm she was the first Lone Girl Guide in the province. Later in life she was a Girl Guide Captain. This was to be the first in a long line of many firsts. At the young age of 13 she was commuting to Winnipeg by train to attend Kelvin High School, graduating from Grade 12 two years ahead of time. After graduating from Normal School, as it was then called, she taught school in the Emerson area until 1939. Every summer she went to summer session at the University of Manitoba. In 1936 she was the assistant Dean of Women of the summer school. In 1939 having spent the summer as the Women's Co-ordinator for the Gimli Youth Camp, she moved to Winnipeg to teach in the Winnipeg schools. There she continued her interest in experimental teaching programs, children with learning disabilities, physical education and music.

Not abandoning her rural roots, she continued to be an adjudicator for poetry and drama at rural festivals until she joined the WRENS' (Women's Royal Naval Service) in 1942. Responsible for personnel and troubleshooting she enjoyed postings in Boston, New York, Washington, DC, Ottawa, Halifax, Digby, Montreal, and Toronto.

Resuming her teaching career in 1945 this time with Junior High students in Winnipeg, she married Ulderic Grant on November 23, 1945. In those days, for a female teacher to get married was professional suicide. Married females were not allowed to teach school in the city of Winnipeg. She successfully lobbied, setting a valuable precedent for others and was allowed to continue teaching after she married. Unfortunately, she was soon forced to resign because she was, (gasp), pregnant, and of course pregnant ladies could not teach anywhere. For the next seven years she managed the family farm and had three daughters. Another arcane rule was that although a married teacher could now teach, she could not if she had a child under two years of age. Returning to teaching full time after her youngest daughter was two in 1952 she retired as librarian at R.B. Russell in 1976.

Based on her experiences, she was instrumental, along, with other committee members of the Manitoba Teacher's Society, in successfully lobbying and changing the following policies. Women were placed in the lowest pay classification, she and fellow BPW (Business and Professional Women) member Olive Flatt saw to it that that was changed. Married women were routinely denied salary advancement and all women were forced to retire five years earlier than men.

Although busy raising family, teaching full time, and farming Irene maintained an active membership in many organizations and committees. The Business and Professional Women's clubs of Canada and the Associated Country Women of the World (Women's Institute) both honoured her with Life Memberships. As her girls grew older, she became even more involved in a broad range of committees and organizations. These included Dugald Costume Museum (Life Membership), Manitoba Craft Guild, Women's Canadian Club, Winnipeg and Manitoba Teachers' Associations, Manitoba Council on Aging, Planned Parenthood Manitoba, Women's Health Clinic, YW-YMCA, Manitoba Historical Society, Antique Motorcycle of America, Manitoba Action Committee on the Status of Women, and the International Peace Garden (Life Membership).

From 1972 to 1982 she was a citizen advisor to Legal Aid Manitoba (eastern region), during which time she organized information meetings between rural women and lawyers. Many workshops and seminars were organized by her on family violence and women and the law to help educate women on their rights. Her work with the Provincial Family Law Reform Committee led to the passage of the Family Maintenance Act and the Marital Property Act. She was instrumental in the founding of the Fort Garry Women's Resource Centre, helping to draft its constitution, lobbying for grant money, and developed and monitored its initial stages. For 12 years she served as a member of the Land Use Committee of the Manitoba Environment Council and chaired the environment committee of the Provincial Council of Women for three years. In 1990 The Government of Canada recognized Irene with the Order of the Persons award. In 2005 she was awarded the Order of Manitoba by the Government of Manitoba.

Conclusion

At the end of this fiscal year as we approach our 25th Anniversary, we remind ourselves of the importance of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, since 1982 part of Canada's constitution and the framework for LEAF's work. Although all sections of "The Charter" are relevant to the advancement of equality, LEAF's focus has been on the equality provisions. These did not come into effect until 1985.

Section 15 (1) *Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex or mental or physical disability.*

(2) *Subsection (1) does not preclude any law, program or activity that has as its object the amelioration of conditions of disadvantaged individuals or groups including those that are disadvantaged because of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.*

Section 28 *Notwithstanding anything in this Charter, the rights and freedoms referred to in it are guaranteed equally to male and female persons.*

We remember, also, the words of Helena Orton, now deceased, LEAF's Litigation Director in the early years – words that remain relevant, "Knowing the significance of constitutional language in setting a framework within which women's equality rights would be litigated, women were active participants in the legislative process resulting in the proclamation of sections 15 and 28 of the *Charter*. Canadian women also knew that the concept of equality and legislated equality guarantees have been interpreted in a variety of ways by theorists and judicial decision makers over history and around the world, with results that have often reinforced rather than relieved the disadvantages of women and minorities. Therefore, just as important as obtaining the *Charter* guarantees is the participation of women and other equality seekers in the judicial process of interpreting and applying the *Charter's* equality guarantees". Helena was one of the many women with a deep commitment to the advancement of equality – women and men who are part of the important story, locally, nationally, and internationally.

We will celebrate the Anniversary throughout the next year, but we know that the journey to equality is far from over. If anything, the challenges have increased and are more complex. For change to be truly transformative, your ongoing commitment and support will be essential. You are part of the story end part of the journey. We share both with you.

On behalf of the Board of Directors of LEAF Manitoba,

Betty Hopkins

Chair/Coordinator

Please share your ideas for celebrating LEAF's Anniversary and Manitoba's homecoming 2010.

Appendices

Board of Directors

Amelia Curran is an MA student in Sociology at the University of Manitoba and completed her BA in Sociology at the University of Winnipeg. She is currently doing research on youth and youth serving agencies for a project entitled "Transforming Inner-city and Aboriginal Communities," while completing a thesis on at-risk youth. Amelia is also government appointed student representative on the University of Manitoba Board of Governors. She has volunteered with LEAF for the past four years, helping to organize the Youth Conference, taking the No Means No training, and helping with the Person's Day Breakfast.

Kate Dobie graduated in 2006 with a University of Winnipeg Administrative Studies Degree. Currently she is working toward her Chartered Accountant designation. Kate has been a LEAF member throughout her student days, volunteered at the Persons Day Breakfast in 2008 and 2009, and is interested in more extensive involvement with the organization. Throughout her school years, Kate has been very active in sports both as a volunteer and as a participant. As a participant, she was a member of Team Manitoba basketball and participated in its '99 Western Canada Games and the '01 Canada Games and is a former captain of the Winnipeg Women's Basketball Team.

Dr. Ertrice Eddy received her undergraduate training in physical therapy in England and subsequently did post-graduate studies at the University of Manitoba, Faculty of Medicine, receiving a PhD in Neuroanatomy. She has also done other courses in Management and Administration.

Her work experience includes a number of years as a professor at the University of Manitoba; teaching courses to women in a management program; conducting workshops on, and being an Investigator of, issues involving employment equity and cultural diversity; working as a Professional and Consultant in various aspects of the health care system; and as an acting Executive Director of the Citizenship Council of Manitoba. She has worked with a wide variety of community groups in the above areas, and has been an

invited speaker nationally and internationally, the most recent engagement being in Dubai (2006). She has operated her own consulting business and private professional practice for the past 11 years.

Ertrice has also been active in the community, serving as director on many boards, including the Victorian Order of Nurses; the Citizenship Council of Manitoba the Association of Professional Engineers & the National Multicultural Health Council.

She has been the recipient of the YWCA Women of Distinction award, in addition to other community and professional recognition. Ertrice has been a member of LEAF Manitoba since 1993 and acted as co-chair of the Legal committee. She was the national representative for Manitoba on the National Board of Directors of LEAF, completing her 4- ½ year term in October 99. At the national level, she chaired the Structure Task Force that looked at movement of the organization to a policy governance mode of operation. In 2005, she was re-elected to the national Board and also continue to be involved at the local level.

Allison Fenske grew up in Northern Manitoba in a family that championed community involvement. It was within that environment that she developed a passion for equality issues - both women's issues and First Nations issues.

Allison has a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and Native Studies from the University of Saskatchewan and an L.L.B. from the University of Manitoba. She is an associate at Thompson Dorfman Sweatman LLP, practicing primarily in the areas of Aboriginal law (Natural Resource development and the Duty to Consult) and Labour/Employment law.

Allison's past involvements have included the YWCA doing workshops on body image, Pro Bono Students Canada, and the Manitoba Association of Women and the Law - as part of the group that authored and published MAWL's Charter audit.

Allison became involved with LEAF via the annual youth conference. To quote Allison "It has been a tremendous experience and now, having one

conference under my belt I am eager to become more involved in an organization that is one of Canada's leading champions of women's equality issues. I love working with LEAF because of the breadth of issues dealt with and the way I am able to combine my passions for the law, feminism and equality!"

As a member of the Board of LEAF, Allison's main interest is in the development of youth programming including the "No Means No" program and planning for 2010 youth conference to celebrate 25 years of the (effect of) the Charter, bringing together high school students from around the province to learn about, discuss, and enjoy equality issues.

Cyndi Forcand has recently retired from the National Film Board as the Program Administrator for the Prairie Studio. Her responsibilities included management of finances and administration. Cyndi served as a Director and Board Chair of Winnipeg Contemporary Dancers, and was involved with the Professional Institute of the Public Service Council of Canada. Since 1995 Cyndi has been very active on the LEAF Breakfast committee, chaired the committee in 1999, 2000 and 2001. She is currently LEAF's Treasurer.

Beverly Froese is a lawyer and practices at the Public Interest Law Centre of Legal Aid Manitoba. She articulated at the Centre in 2001 and was called to the Manitoba Bar in 2002. Beverly practices primarily in administrative and civil law, with a focus on constitutional, equality, human rights, and poverty law.

She recently obtained her Master's degree from Louisiana State University in U.S. Constitutional and international human rights law. Beverly is a former member of the Board of the Manitoba Association of Rights and Liberties, is currently on the Board of the Community Unemployed Help Centre and a member of the Manitoba Bar Council.

She has given presentations and workshops for community organizations on legal issues that are relevant to women, and has a strong commitment to improving access to justice and promoting equality rights.

Sharron Gould is the Manager of Human Resources for the Winnipeg Police Service. Sharron has been a Human Resources professional for over 20 years with senior experience

- In Labour Relations, Arbitration and Contract Negotiation
- Ten years experience in developing, implementing and monitoring equity and human rights policies/practices
- Design and administration of compensation systems, developing job evaluations and performance evaluations
- Negotiator, Investigator and Mediator
- Training and instruction in the public and private sector
- Twenty-five years experience in Board Development and Governance issues.

Sharron has been on the following boards/committees:

- Board Member - Legal Education Action Fund (L.E.A.F.) Manitoba
- Founding Member – Alternative Dispute Resolution Education Council
- President – Canadian Mental Health Association (National)
- President – Planned Parenthood of Manitoba
- Vice-President – Family Mediation of Manitoba
- President – Canadian Mental Health Association (Manitoba Division)

Betty Hopkins is the chair of the LEAF Manitoba Board of Directors. She has a Bachelor of Science degree and a Bachelor of Social Work. When "paid" she worked in child welfare, some community development and some basic fact-finding research.

Betty chose a career as a volunteer and has done so equivalent to full time employment. The resulting contribution to the community has been prodigious. Betty's involvements are too numerous to list. Some highlights include:

- Worked extensively with women on social assistance
- Child care
- Women in prostitution
- Welfare rights and tenants groups regarding their rights and strategies for change
- Chaired John Howard of Canada and Elizabeth Fry Society of Manitoba Board
- A founding member and the first chair of the Elizabeth Fry Society of Manitoba
- Chaired the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies (C.A.E.F.S.) and various committees

- Past or current member of the following Executive and Boards:
 - John Howard of Canada
 - Children's Home of Winnipeg
 - Social Planning Council of Winnipeg
 - United Way of Winnipeg & Canada
 - C.L.E.A.
 - Institute of Urban Studies
 - P.O.W.E.R.
 - Idea Centre Board
 - Peter Gzowski Golf Tournament for literacy
 - Centre Plan
 - UNPAC
 - Society of Manitobans with Disabilities
 - Community Living Manitoba
 - Winnipeg & Provincial Council of Women
 - Betty was also a member of the LEAF Manitoba LEAF Foundation Fundraising Branch

In October 1999, she completed 4 ½ years on the LEAF National Board where she chaired the Education work group and served on the Strategic Planning & Structure committee and the Executive.

In other involvements in the voluntary sector, Betty has assisted with various conference planning groups, various justice groups, task forces including the Solicitor General's Task Force on Women who receive Federal Sentences, Solicitor General's task force on the role of the voluntary sector/alternative sentencing and restorative justice work, etc.

Betty has always promoted community/citizen "ownership" and participation. Her special interest was in governance issues and policy work groups. Betty wrote or assisted with writing of briefs, philosophy and policy statements, program and budget proposals and analyses, job descriptions, board development plans and manuals, community information and education packages (and presentations). She has emphasized non-hierarchical, non-competitive ways of working, mutual respect and support, collaboration and shared leadership, with a focus on the importance of social justice issues and the concerns and perspectives of women, youth and all "cultures."

Betty has received several recognitions or awards including the YWCA Women of the Year/Women of Distinction Award.

Maxine MacRae is a retired Registered Laboratory Technologist who worked in clinics and hospitals in Manitoba and British Columbia. She has utilized her B.A. (Hons) in Anthropology from the University of Winnipeg in doing research projects for the Manitoba Museum, and the Canadian Red Cross, Maxine has been active in the Big Brother Big Sister organization and has been a Big Sister for the past 14 years.

She has filled many of the offices in Powertalking International (ITC), where she is currently president. Maxine volunteers with the Red Cross and is active in LEAF Manitoba's annual Fundraising Persons Day Breakfast. Maxine was the Co-chair for the 2005 Breakfast, Chairperson of the 2006 Breakfast and Venue Chair in 2007, 08 & 09; she is currently LEAF's secretary.

Janice Perchal is a Certified Management Accountant with extensive experience in both the industry and the service industry. Jan's educational background includes a Bachelor of Arts (Psychology) and a Bachelor of Commerce (Honours).

She is currently employed as the Accountant at Legal Aid Manitoba. Jan has enjoyed volunteering in various women's groups while living in Arizona her group provided the funding for a reading program at a local school. She is currently a member of a group that provides funding for women internationally and locally to further their education.

In an effort to give back to her children's activities, she has served as a volunteer coordinator for their premier soccer club. Jan became involved with L.E.A.F. after attending a breakfast and states that she has enjoyed the various events in which she has volunteered over the last few years.

Loretta Ross has been a lawyer with Myers Weinberg LLP since 2005. Formerly was in house counsel for the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs 1994-2005. Loretta has volunteered as a steering committee member of the Empowering Our Little Sisters Program, a reflection of her commitment to First Nations peoples.

She brings in her life and in her work awareness of and deep commitment to the rights of Aboriginal women and children. Loretta is a volunteer with Transforming Our Future LEAF MB. Her extensive experience,

knowledge and wisdom will enrich the program and will ensure the program's relevance.

Anne Turner is a Crown prosecutor with the Public Prosecution Service of Canada. She received her law degree from the University of Manitoba in 2002 and her BA in Conflict Resolution Studies from the University of Winnipeg in 1999. Anne is also an active Board member with Villa Rosa and works with the Winnipeg Drug Treatment Court. Anne is currently working with LEAF Manitoba on a new program being offered to community groups. Transforming Our Future.

Beatrice E. Watson presently works for the Manitoba Human Rights Commission. She received her BA from the University of Manitoba and is a graduate student at the University of Manitoba, pursuing graduate work in feminist Anthropology. Beatrice is working also toward her certificate in Management Development for Women.

Her work as a freelance journalist has appeared in the Winnipeg Free Press, London Free Press, Herizon Magazine, the Toronto Sun and in the book "Spider Women – A Tapestry of Creativity & Healing." She has been heard locally on CBC Radio.

Beatrice was a founding member of the Selkirk Co-op Abuse against Women and serves as a volunteer mediator with the Manitoba Justice Centre and a volunteer Peer Counselor at the Fort Garry Women's Resource Centre where she is on the Board. She has co-chaired the Manitoba Anti-Poverty Organization. She is the treasurer for the Guyanese Cultural Organization and volunteers at Folklorama. She is the vice-president of The Creative Foundation.



LEAF Supporters Say...

"Because LEAF works towards achieving equality for all women and girls in Canada, I consider it a privilege to lend my support to the organization. LEAF can accomplish what an individual cannot."

Berenice Sisler

"LEAF combines impeccable, first class, intelligent research and judgement with dogged determination. I can't imagine where women's rights would be without the tireless effort of the people behind LEAF. It is immensely comforting for me to know, as a woman that LEAF is working continuously on my behalf to protect many of our hard won rights and in addition, is not always satisfied with the status quo and has the creativity to recognize where our rights ought to be expanded."

Gail Asper

"The struggle for establishing and maintaining equality is ongoing. LEAF is an important part of this. It isn't a done deal."

Marjorie Blankstein

"We must improve equality for all women, and make sure they are not limited in their opportunities because they are women. LEAF is a sound organization that does thorough research and focuses on cases that have a broad influence on women's equality."

Tannis M. Richardson

LEAF Manitoba Membership Form

Join L.E.A.F. in “making the law work for women”. LEAF is a national organization which promotes equality for women through legal action and public education based on the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

L.E.A.F. is concerned with the multiple oppression suffered by many women because of their colour, national or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, age or disability, as well as their sex.

Members are important to L.E.A.F.’s work. They are the “shareholders” of the organization, reflecting the wide ownership of and commitment to the goals, philosophy and work.

Advantages of Membership:

- **Satisfaction of participating in ground-breaking litigation**
- **Making the Charter work for everyone**
- **Receiving our national and Manitoba newsletters**
- **Notification of LEAF Manitoba/Winnipeg events**
- **Voting rights at the LEAF Manitoba annual general meeting**
- **Contribution to the advancement of equality and justice for all women.**

Please return this form with a cheque payable to
 L.E.A.F. Manitoba
 301 – 960 Portage Avenue
 Winnipeg, Manitoba
 R3G 0R4
 Tel/Fax: (204) 453-1379 Email: leafmb@mts.net



APPLICATION FOR L.E.A.F. MEMBERSHIP

I support the education and litigation objectives of L.E.A.F., which include the promotion of equality for women in areas such as economic and employment rights, rights within personal relationships, and the right to reproductive freedom.

Name

Address _____
postal code

Telephone home *business* *fax*

Email *Occupation*



Please consider the following guidelines when choosing a membership fee:
*Regular (\$25)/ Senior, Student, unemployed or equivalent (\$7.50)/
 Organization (\$30).*

Your membership fees \$ _____
 Donation:
 LEAF MB WISE Endowment at Wpg Fdn* \$ _____
 LEAF National* \$ _____
**Tax receipts issued for amounts over \$10*

Total cheque amount \$ _____

I would like to provide additional support to LEAF MB by contributing my time to the following areas:

- Fundraising and Finance
- Breakfast Committee
- Public Education
- Speakers Bureau
- Special Events
- Legal Work
- Membership Committee
- Library Maintenance
- Administrative Support

Please return this form with a cheque payable to LEAF Manitoba,
 301 – 960 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R3G 0R4