



Looking back at 2007: For us politics has become a family affair

2007 was a busy and “productive” year for the NWLC. I was almost 7 months pregnant at the 2006 Leadership Convention and my husband Mike and I welcomed our beautiful daughter Sophie into the world in March. While I was home, eagerly awaiting her arrival, I busied myself with reworking the NWLC web site. Once she finally arrived, she has traveled with me across the country attending NWLC events from a Judy Higginbotham “meet and greet” in White Rock, BC to the New Brunswick Women's Commission AGM in Sussex, NB and many stops along the way. Thank you to all of you who told me how beautiful my baby is (she is!), kindly offered an extra pair of hands, and warmly welcomed me, Sophie and sometimes her dad everywhere we went.

As many of you know, the focus of our efforts in 2007 has been on our communications materials and approach. We have worked to update our existing materials – with a new logo, a new look and a new web site. And we created new tools – such as a new e-newsletter, a Facebook presence, and brochure – so that we can better keep in touch with each other and spread our message.

We continue to work with the election readiness team to implement the Leader's commitment to ensure that 33% of candidates in the next election are women and we're working to ensure that we're supporting their success.

We've also been engaged on Parliament Hill by making submissions on key pieces of legislation that will impact women's participation in politics: *An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act (accountability with respect to loans)* as to its



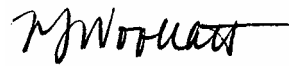
From top to bottom: Posing with Liberal Whip Karen Redman while 7 months pregnant at the Leadership convention in Montreal; Stéphane Dion holding Sophie flanked by her mom and dad; Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock federal Liberal candidate Marlene White holding Sophie while I look on

potentially negative impact on women's participation in politics and on *An Act to provide for consultations with electors on their preferences for appointments to the Senate* as to whether the proposed reforms to Senate would increase women's representation in the legislative branch of government.

I also want to acknowledge the tremendous support and engagement in the NWLC from women's caucus. They are each amazing and inspiring women and it is a privilege to work with

them. You will see some articles from the Hon. Carolyn Bennett, the Hon. Belinda Stronach and Yasmin Ratansi in this edition of our e-newsletter.

As always, don't hesitate to let us know what you think and PLEASE keep your photos and articles coming!



Nicole Foster Woollatt
President, National Women's Liberal Commission

Merci Lucienne!

Former minister and Westmount—Ville-Marie Member of Parliament Lucienne Robillard stepped down in January. Mme Robillard entered politics almost 18 years ago: first in 1989 as the member for Chambly in the National Assembly of Quebec, and then in 1995 as the federal member.



In a tribute to Mme Robillard in the House, Michael Ignatieff said that, "Canada is a better place because of her public service... We will miss her. We will especially miss her political wisdom, her laugh and her wonderful sense of humour. In conclusion, I think the finest tribute I can pay my dear colleague and friend is to say that when she finished reading her statement a few minutes ago, a colleague of hers came up to me and whispered, 'What

a loss. What a loss to our party.' We wholeheartedly agree.

Bloc MP Serge Menard stated that she "raises the tenor of the debate. She is the kind of person who makes politics look good and who helps us improve our reputation."

On the occasion of her departure, Mme Robillard stated in the House that, "Often being a politician is a thankless job, but it can be extremely rewarding when we succeed in serving our constituents..."

Throughout the years I worked wholeheartedly and I would like to think I have shown that it is possible to be in politics and stay true to one's self, by staying true to one's values, by being loyal and honest and maintaining a sense of duty."

Keeping each other posted

The Nepean Women's Liberal Association (from left to right): Mary de Toro, Vice-president and Patricia Pepper, President of the Nepean Women's Liberal Association getting ready to welcome guests to the NWLA Hospitality Suite hosted at the LPC(O) AGM in Deerhurst in November. The Hon. Don Boudria dropped by the party with his guitar and fine voice to lead a rousing sing-song with the many Liberals who joined the Nepean women at this very successful event.

The Nepean Women are holding a roundtable on two issues: aging and housing and its effects on women and families - Saturday, February 23 from 9am to 12 noon at Stillwater Creek Retirement Home, 18 Robertson Road (south of Richmond Road).
RSVP Patricia Pepper at (613) 829-9821 or at patricia1@primus.ca



By-elections on March 17: **Get Involved!**

The NWLC wants to make sure more and more Liberal women are successful when they decide to run for office. How can you help? **By supporting three amazing Liberal women candidates who are running in by-elections right now.**

Campaigns need people to call potential voters, put up signs and posters, knock on doors, drop off flyers, fundraise, answer phones, attend and organize rallies and election events. (If you are

considering a run for office, the best way to learn about campaigns is to volunteer on one!)

Volunteering is a great way to lead a political life and support each other's leadership. It can create political opportunity, connecting talented up-and-coming women with established (or soon-to-be established) women leaders. Volunteer opportunities equip women with the experience, relationships, and support required to excel in the political landscape.



Joyce Murray is a former BC Cabinet Minister, successful entrepreneur, lifelong environmentalist, community advocate, and the Liberal candidate for Vancouver Quadra. To **get involved**, contact her campaign at 604.732.7555 or by email, info@joycemurray.ca or just stop by her campaign office located at 2607 West 16th Avenue, Vancouver, BC. www.joycemurray.liberal.ca

Joan Beatty was the first Aboriginal woman to be elected to the Saskatchewan Legislature and named to Cabinet. A former Saskatchewan NDP cabinet minister and Aboriginal activist, she is the Liberal candidate in the riding of Desnethé-Missinippi-Churchill River. To **get involved**, contact her campaign at 1-888-425-1292 or by email, contact@joanbeatty.ca or just stop by her campaign office located at 123 La Ronge Avenue, La Ronge, SK. <http://joanbeatty.ca>



Martha Hall Findlay is a well-respected lawyer, businesswoman, successful entrepreneur, the sole female candidate who vied for the leadership of the Liberal Party at the recent convention, and the Liberal candidate for Willowdale. To **get involved**, contact her campaign at 416-221-7885 or by email, info@votemartha.ca or just stop by her campaign office located 200 Finch Street West, Suite 106, North York. www.votemartha.ca

Women are the Key to Stopping 'Steve'

Contribution from the Hon. Carolyn Bennett

In the fall, Nick Nanos, the Conservative pollster, told the Canadian Medical Association leadership conference that, "The structural barrier to a Stephen Harper majority was women". He went on to say that Liberals have a huge advantage with women for 3 reasons:

1. Negative advertising puts women off
2. Women prefer a discussion of issues and solutions
3. Women want to see a vision for the future for their children and grandchildren.

He warned the doctors not to underestimate the resilience of the Liberal brand. This is good for us as Liberal women, but we cannot rest on our laurels. We have to continue to work hard to truly earn the gender split in the electorate.

When Maureen Kempston Darkes became President of General Motors Canada, she immediately struck a Women's Advisory Committee. They had two jobs: to ensure that women were moving up appropriately through the organization, and to make certain that women would buy her cars.

Women's caucus and the National Women's Liberal Commission must play that role within our party. We must fulfill an audit function of the meaningful engagement of women. Not only as candidates, MPs and Senators but as riding presidents, campaign managers and officers at all levels.

'Non quo sed quo modo' is the motto of Women's College Hospital - it's not only what we do but how. We have to be very vigilant on the policy side, the content for sure, but we also need to demonstrate an inclusive process. We need to do what women do best: listen to and learn from communities and then ensure that our policies are relevant and responsive to the problems and the solutions we have heard.

Ursula Franklin has said that women have always been suspicious of people suggesting simple solutions for

clearly complex human problems. Their bodies, their families, their work in communities have taught them the need for complex solutions for complex problems. As H.L. Mencken has said, "For every complex human problem there is a neat simple solution, it's just that it's

wrong." So, as Liberals, we have to work much harder to create simpler messages to describe the complex long term solutions needed to build our 'Greener, Fairer, Richer' Canada.

As women, we trust 'bottom up' processes and solutions. We have a huge opportunity to contrast the Liberal party method with the top down, micromanagement of Stephen Harper's paternalistic administration. We must

demonstrate a competent, respectful, inclusive team that is ready to govern. We must show Canadians that we would be very different not only in WHAT we do (3-K's: Kids, Kelowna, Kyoto) but also HOW we would do it.

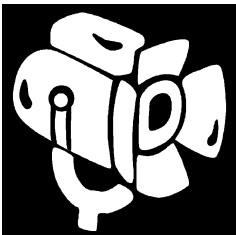
As Nellie Cournoyea said in 'Speaking Together' in 1975 about the plight of our Aboriginal peoples, "Paternalism has been a failure".

Peace, order and good government must mean robust democratic processes with voices for citizens, MPs and Ministers. Stephen Harper is not governing. He is administering this country like the CEO of a corporation who just gets to fire people (even officers of Parliament) that he doesn't like.

We need Canadians to understand the difference between being governed by the Parliament of Canada or administered through fear by the CEO of the Harper administration.

I want to give a huge thank you to all the fabulous, engaged citizens that make up the National Women's Liberal Commission. This is an important time to reach out to all the other committed women who share our passion for social justice. The women of Canada will be invaluable to the most important initiative of this century, Stopping 'President' Steve!





Spotlight on...

The South Vancouver Island Federal Liberal Women's Commission

The South Vancouver Island Federal Liberal Women's Commission is a wonderful group of very motivated women. This club recently organized a successful fundraiser benefitting our two south island women candidates, Anne Park Shannon running in Victoria and Briony Penn who is running in Saanich—Gulf Islands.

The event, named *Classy Threadz*, held this past November, was a fashion show with a twist - using consignment store fashions, showing off a stylish approach to recycling and reusing. *Classy Threadz* was dynamically co-hosted by the Hon. Scott Brison, MP and local MLA Sheila Orr. They made quite a duo! The models were also a highlight and included well-known local Liberals ranging in age from 20-something to 60-something. The Hon. Keith Martin, MP (Esquimalt-Juan de Fuca) was there to support his future House of Commons colleagues – and fellow models. He graced the floor in some fabulous fashions along with the lovely Anne Park Shannon and Briony Penn. The *Classy Threadz Event* was both a “fun”raiser and a “fund”raiser. Many of the participants have requested it become an annual event.

Congratulations to the well-organized Fundraising Committee on a successful event!

The club plans to host another fundraising event this year and wants to increase their membership from 39 to 50. Most importantly, the club will be hard at work to send Anne and Briony to Ottawa during the next election!



From left: Anne Park Shannon, Scott Brison and Briony Penn



From left: Anne Park Shannon, Keith Martin, Scott Brison , Briony Penn

Update on the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women

By Committee Chair Yasmin Ratansi

The Committee has completed several studies since I have been the Chair; these include the Economic Security of Women, Trafficking of Women and Girls, and the Impact of the Cutbacks to the Court Challenges Program.

In early February, we had several ministers appear before the committee to discuss one or more of the above mentioned studies. On February 7th, the Minister of Justice and the Attorney General and the Minister of Public Safety were questioned regarding steps their departments have taken in response to the committee's report on human trafficking. On February 5th the Minister of Canadian Heritage was called to explain how closing regional offices of Status of Women Canada has helped serve women better, and why the Court Challenges Program was cancelled.

Finally, the Committee called upon other ministers to appear but dates have not been finalized. These ministers include Minister of Human Resources and Social Development regarding the economic security of women and Minister of Citizenship and Immigration regarding human trafficking.

Meetings of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women are open to the public, and therefore, I encourage members of the Women's Liberal Commission to attend.

National Women's Liberal Caucus Releases Pink Book II

In December 2006, the National Liberal Women's Caucus released, *The Pink Book: A policy framework for Canada's future, Volume I* that outlined a progressive vision to advance the economic and social equality of women. The response was overwhelmingly positive.

A commitment was then made to develop further policy options after consultations with those who seek to improve the lives of women and their families. The result is *The Pink Book, Volume II* that deals with violence against women, housing, Aboriginal women, immigrant and refugee women and rural women.

Economic insecurity is a root cause of the inequality which prevents women from participating to their full potential in society. A chief – and tragic – outcome of this inequality is poverty, which is inextricably linked to women's vulnerability to violence and their ability to leave abusive relationships. These and other barriers to equality are exacerbated by factors such as race, class, ethnicity, culture, language, geography (urban versus rural) and citizenship status.

The setting for this is a country with a federal surplus of \$14.1 billion and projected surpluses above \$10 billion over the next two years. There is no better time to help thousands of marginalized Canadians.

