



## OWN E-LETTER – April 2018, Vol. 5, Issue 1



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### from the OWN desk

E. Harris

Some of Canada's leading women's groups are testing new ways to unite through collective lobbying campaigns, to spur action on women's issues after almost two decades without a national organization to take the lead

on advocacy.

For almost 30 years after it was founded in 1972, the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) played a unifying role for the feminist movement in Canada, serving as the glue to rally more than 700 member organizations to lobby governments for fundamental equality reforms, including pay equity and the inclusion of equality rights provisions in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. OWN was one of those 700 members.

NAC closed in 2001, and advocacy work on women's issues splintered among issue-specific organizations that worked independently or in small groups. The approach has left no major national voice to speak with a broader view on women's causes.

The emerging solution of choice for many is not another national organization such as NAC, but more flexible broad-based, ad-hoc alliances that come together on pressing issues and disperse after a campaign is over.

There is a "bubbling" energy provincially and federally as OWN joins 170 organizations to lend support and explore an untapped appetite for collective action on women's issues after years of relative quiet amid widespread budget cuts in the sector. It may be now, that there are so many disparate versions of feminism that one single organization is not the answer.

On behalf of our OWN membership:

- OWN is a member of the provincial Roundtable on Violence against Women and attends quarterly meetings.  
The Roundtable on Violence Against Women was established in 2015 as part of *It's Never Okay: an Action Plan to Stop Sexual Violence and Harassment* to provide advice to the Minister of the Status of Women and partner ministries on ongoing and emerging issues of gender-based violence.  
We are involved in gender-based pre-election questions for ALL candidates.

- OWN attended the Women's Empowerment Summit -Then, Now, Next: Ontario's Strategy for Women's Empowerment, sponsored by the Government of Ontario in partnership with Ontario 150.  
In attendance were Premier Kathleen Wynn and Dr. Roberta Bondar. The Summit focused on 6 themes: Taking charge, claiming space, building teams, creating opportunities, seeking justice, and reaching out.
- OWN influenced the development of the Ontario Securities Commission Seniors Strategy.
- OWN Housing Committee continues to seek endorsement of our LIP (Living in Place) campaign by networking provincially with community non-profits, and through personal contacts with the Premier, Cabinet Ministers, 2 Ministers for the Status of Women, PC and NDP Critics, and by letter writing to our MPPs.
- OWN collaborated with the YWCA in raising awareness and funds for identified upgrades to ensure safety and security of the vulnerable population of tenants at Winona Place.
- OWN is engaging with the Canadian Women's Foundation May campaign to End Violence to create and promote posts focusing on barriers to reaching older women in urban/rural areas, as survivors or are experiencing sexual violence, as well as accessibility issues.
- OWN is partnering with the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAW) in assessing the current advocacy capacity of women's organizations in Canada to do intersectional feminist advocacy and policy development.
- OWN celebrated Equality Day, our annual signature event on April 17<sup>th</sup>, with Dr. Rev. Cheri DiNovo. Watch for photos of our successful event in a future Newsletter.
- OWN is collaborating with the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses (OAITH) on the Aging without Violence project to identify gaps and needs which will inform the provincial framework for preventing violence against older women.
- OWN will be forming a **Wise Women Circle** to explore the experience of living alone. **Watch for the launch of this pilot project in May 2018.**
- OWN is planning an education workshop in June (tba) on Elder Financial Abuse and Estate Fraud Prevention called ESTATE PROTECT.

\*Check our website and facebook page for more info on OWN activities and news.

<http://olderwomensnetwork.org/>

<https://www.facebook.com/OlderWomensNetwork/>

**Disclaimer:** The views and opinions expressed in the following articles are those of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Older Women's Network.

## **Activism and Intersectional Feminist Advocacy:**

**Did anyone observe and celebrate International Women's Day on March 8<sup>th</sup> this year in Toronto?**

IWD began as a labour movement day across Europe and North America in the early 1900s and in December 1977 the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution declaring a United Nations Day for Women's Rights and International Peace.

"International Women's Day should be a time to celebrate the simple acts of courage and determination by women who take extraordinary actions to stand up and protect equality and human rights."

IWD is an appropriate time to measure our progress towards gender equality, and to highlight the contributions of women in Canada and around the world. While progress has been made over the last century, the struggle for equality continues.

### **Why Did I March?**

By Karen Henderson OWN member  
Founder/CEO Long Term Care Planning Network

On January 20—my 71<sup>st</sup> birthday—I participated in my first march, Women March in Toronto (Defining the Future—one year since Pussy March)

Why did I do it? Well, I was just amazed at the American women and what they did last year when they marched on Washington, and I missed our local counterpart march as I was away, so this march looked like the one.

Why else? I think marching at least once in my life was on my bucket list—I felt an obligation to participate and experience.

And what did I experience? Even though there were Trump related placards, this march was not anti-Trump, it was a platform for local issues—race and gender equity, religion, ability, sexuality, immigration, and healthcare. I saw and listened, but what I heard came from younger women whose issues I certainly identify with...principally workplace discrimination and harassment. I was very heartened to see so many of these young women—many in their teens—marching with very meaningful placards. What I did not see or hear was anything from/about older women (the old broads) who still want the right to work, be counted and be free from abuse.

At the end of the speeches, we left for a brief walk on the streets around Nathan Phillips Square. The male and female marchers with whom I spoke were concerned and engaged. Many of us had our dogs with us—they all had a party.

In summary I am a feminist, and an advocate but not an activist—at least not at the moment. Never say never.

## Aging without violence:

### UN Security Council



### Media Advisory: International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women commemoration at UN Headquarters

**Date:** Wednesday, November 15, 2017

The official commemoration of the United Nations [International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women](#) (November 25) took place on Wednesday, 22 November 2017, at the ECOSOC Chamber, United Nations Headquarters, New York.

One in three women and girls experience violence in their lifetime. This year's commemoration coincides with the unprecedented mobilization of millions behind #MeToo and other movements in an escalating global protest against sexual harassment and assault.

See link below for more information on the event: <https://bit.ly/2gMi8km>

Check out the 16 Days editorial content at <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/end-violence-against-women>

## Systems Advocacy:

### Report on Housing Meeting

Jill Jones, Peterborough

<https://globalnews.ca/news/4040943/older-womens-network-peterborough-housing/>

Our meeting focused on Housing and Basic Health Care needs:

- Peterborough Age Friendly Committee focusing on housing is submitting an RFP to hire consultants to identify various housing options - identify planning changes required, and potential city/provincial owned properties suitable for housing hubs
- OWN was invited to attend a housing forum sponsored by our local MPP Jeff Leal where the issue of Living in Place was raised - Jeff has invited OWN to meet with him regarding housing issues
- March 1, 2018, we are attending a Peterborough City Council meeting focused on allowing "secondary Units"
- I have joined our Local Raging Grannies - who all now have their "Living in Place" own buttons as part of our costumes

## Networking and Partnerships:

### Age-Friendly issues:

Look for this article in our next e-letter

### Why Loneliness Can Be Dangerous—Even Deadly

Karen Henderson

Founder/CEO Long Term Care Planning Network



## OWN HOUSING COMMITTEE

“I wish all you beautiful women at OWN the best in 2018. Your work for us is hugely important and valuable. Thank you for all that you do”.

**Ulli Groppler**, member of OWN Housing Committee

Women’s Transitional Housing

Fred Victor Mission

### #ACCESELFIE – What is it?

You’ve all heard of a “selfie” – Maybe you’ve even taken one of yourself.

If you use any sort of mobility aid, whether a cane, a walker, a wheelchair or something else, we’re asking you to take an “accesselfie” and post it on Twitter, or Facebook, or in an email or some other social media with the hashtag “#accesselfie” and a comment about the need for accessible housing.

For example:

If housing is a human right, why doesn’t that include people who use wheelchairs? Change the Building Code.

#accesselfie

### SENIORS VOTES count:

Elections Canada reports that both federally, and in each province and territory, voter turnout is highest in the 65-74 age group. It declines after 74, but still remains higher than among eligible voters under age 64. As the proportion of seniors in the population increases, seniors’ votes will make up an increasing share of the total votes cast.

2018 is a “double election” year in Ontario. Elections will be held at both the provincial and municipal levels, and *our OWN women can make a difference*.

### QUESTIONS FOR ALL CANDIDATES

Please ask these questions at all candidates meetings and anywhere else you meet a candidate. Ask a friend to video-record your questions and the candidates' replies.

Given the huge need for affordable ACCESSIBLE housing, what will be your strategy for meeting that need?

Given the increasing numbers of people of all ages with disabilities, will you support changing the Ontario Building Code to make it mandatory that all new housing be universal design (that is, fully accessible)?

\*Please click to view the basic facts of the National Housing Strategy prior to the provincial election:

<http://www.wellesleyinstitute.com/housing/canadas-national-housing-strategy-the-basic-facts/>

We encourage all our members to write to their MPP, see this link for a sample letter you can use: <http://olderwomensnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Advocacy-letter-to-our-MPPs-PDF.pdf>

### Unique Retirement living opportunity

Leehe Lev

Do you live in a house alone? Have you thought about sharing it with fellow peers? This unique living arrangement offers companionship while helping out with your living expenses. If this interests you contact [Leehe@WholeSelf.ca](mailto:Leehe@WholeSelf.ca)/416-924-3145 or visit [www.WholeSelf.ca](http://www.WholeSelf.ca) for more information.



### Modernized access symbol:

A new access symbol that shows a human figure moving forward in a wheelchair, referred to as the dynamic symbol of access, will gradually replace the traditional, static wheelchair image at City-owned properties. Council agreed to endorse the modernized symbol, as recommended by the Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee and informed by the Forward Movement campaign. Council also supported asking the Ontario government to adopt the new symbol.

## **OWN Special Interest Groups (SIGs)**

### **OWN Feminist Book Group, North Toronto**

Barbara Greer

Northern District Branch of Toronto Public Libraries, meet on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of every month 2 - 4 pm.

Eglinton Subway, walk one block north on west side of Yonge to Broadway, library is on north side of Broadway just west of Yonge.

Newcomers are always welcome. It isn't essential to have read the book. The book list for the year is made in December with suggestions from members. Effort is made to alternate fiction with non-fiction. Members volunteer to lead our discussions in January if possible. This doesn't mean preparing to give a lecture, it just means getting the discussion going and mentioning anything in the book that interested, puzzled, amused you. Talk always overflows our time. Books are chosen only if they are available in the TPL system. The group also often takes in a movie on the first Wednesday of the month, arrangements by email.

See our website for the list of books for 2018:

[http://olderwomensnetwork.org/book\\_discussion\\_groups](http://olderwomensnetwork.org/book_discussion_groups)

Books read so far this year: "They Called Me Number One":

## **Appreciation of OWN Members**

Elsie Dollekamp – long-time member and dedicated donor to OWN's past and future initiatives.

Congratulations to OWN Centenarians LIVING IN PLACE at the OWN Housing Co-op: Bea Levis will be turning 100, and Edith Ginsburg will be 102 years young this year.

Appreciation from valued OWN member:

I'm proud to be a long standing member of Provincial OWN.

In sisterhood,

Katherine Langley, Peterborough

## **In Memoriam:**



Marielle Allard, former member of OWN, passed away suddenly in 2018. Her contributions to the OWN Council and to La Vie en Rose were greatly appreciated.

We are grateful to activist and feminist Josephine Black for her bequest to OWN.  
Etta Ginsberg McEwan, long-time activist and feminist, passed away at Baycrest Centre.

## **Anam Cara**

**Anam Cara** is a gaelic term for soul mate. Soul mates share a bond that transcends time and place. OWN has a commemorative record book which honours individuals or a group. A donation to OWN purchases a page in the book with a message concerning the honoree, a photo, or any other tribute desired. This book is on permanent display at the OWN office. It is a great way to celebrate a life. If you would like to take advantage of this, please contact OWN.

