

Campaign

Serbian Women and the Art of Lobbying – Congress President Bernice Davidson Reports...

Three young women from Serbia, members of a political action group in Belgrade, attended our Women's Campaign School 2002 session here in Vancouver. Of the three grads, Aleksandra Petrovic Graonic, Mirjana Kovacevic and Milica Panic, Aleksandra wrote in December to say their organization, "Voice of Difference" has organized 50 local seminars for women since attending our school. As a result they influenced changes in their Labour Act and the Criminal Code through lobbying, and they're not done yet! Privatization has brought difficulties for many Serbian workers. "Voice of

Difference" is actively supporting local women's initiatives to do with economic status, health, political participation and much more. Aleksandra, her husband and daughter will move to Quebec next summer. Her letter to congress member Lynda Jovanovic says "after the hardship and a lot of work required to earn just a decent living, I hope to come to a country where I would have one job and still have time to live that one life I have and maybe I would be able to raise more children." She writes that she is especially happy knowing her daughter will have more doors open to her.



Bernice Davidson

5th Annual Women's Campaign School Expands to Four Days Hon. Alexa McDonough, MP is keynote speaker at the Alumni Reception

The 5th Annual Women's Campaign School is taking place April 24-27, 2003 at UBC Robson Square in Vancouver, British Columbia. Hon. Alexa McDonough, MP, former leader of the Federal NDP Party, is keynote speaker at the Alumni Reception on Thursday, April 24th, also at UBC Robson Square.

To meet the needs of the students, this year the Women's Campaign School has expanded to four full days of curriculum. This intensive and interactive program offers unique, non-partisan, non-issue based campaign training that covers all levels of governance – federal, provincial, municipal and First Nations.

Among the 2003 facilitators are Penny Priddy, Surrey City Councilor and Former MLA, Hon. Linda Reid, MLA; Chief Bonnie Leonard; Libby Davies, MP; Patty Sahota, MLA and

Women's Campaign School graduate; Elizabeth Cull, Former MLA; and internationally accredited speaker Margaret Hope. A sample of the topics covered include campaign fundraising, finances, creating a campaign plan, backroom politics, ethics, presentation skills, building a profile and general governance.

The Women's Campaign School is committed to the increased participation of a diversity of women in the political process in order to reflect a balanced representation within our governments and communities. Registration is open to all women. A limited number of bursaries are available. Get in on the Early Bird registration fee – register before March 24th.

To register or for more information call (604) 878-8228, email congress@telus.net or visit our website at <http://www.canadianwomenvoterscongress.org>



Alexa McDonough



Mary Collins

For the past few years, I have had the great privilege of working on several international projects, many of which have involved working with women in either political or economic development. Among these was a project, which has just completed in Russia, on Women and Economic Development. It was a remarkable experience, in that we saw some many wonderful results. Part of the project involved helping several communities in different parts of Russia develop pilots for the training of women who were having difficulties accessing the job market for a variety of reasons. In one case, it was because of their youth and lack of job skills, in others because they were over 40 and considered too old to hire. Other pilots involved preparing women to start their own businesses as well as supporting women with multifaceted difficulties.

Travels with Mary

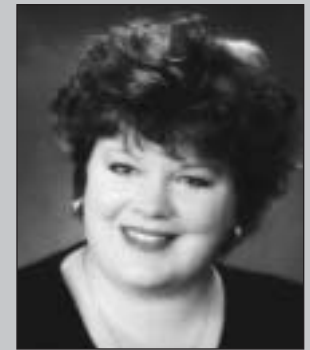
The human side of this project was incredible. The YWCA here in Vancouver through their Focus programs were partnered with a project in Kirov Chepetsky – a fairly small city some 1000 miles from Moscow. To see the personal development of the women who organized and managed the program over the 18 months, let alone hear about all of the women they had helped, was truly amazing. Most heartwarming however, were the personal friendships that blossomed between partners, which will have a life long impact on the lives of everyone involved.

My particular component of the project was the development of gender based analysis into the policy making process at the federal level – through the Ministry of Labour and Social Development. As a result of the relationships which developed, one of the Deputy Ministers of the Department took on the issues of gender, and working with groups throughout the government, the Parliament and the private and not for profit sector, has developed a Gender Strategy

that appears to be on the verge of being accepted by the Parliament and could be a major step forward in advancing women's equality in Russia.

For the past year, I have also been engaged in a health reform project in the Chuvash Republic of Russia (about 800 kms east of Moscow along the Volga River) where I shall be returning for awhile in early 2003 before taking up a longer-term position with the World Health Organization in Moscow. I shall keep you posted and will continue to support the work of the Congress and particularly its Campaign School with great interest. I hope the school can continue its outreach to international partners as has been the case for the past few years so that our experience may be of help to women in many parts of the world who are also trying to improve their participation and influence in the political process.

Regards,
Mary Collins
Honorary Co-Chair,
Women's Campaign School



Hon. Linda Reid



Patty Sahota



Chief Bonnie Leonard



Margaret Hope

"The Center for Campaign Leadership has built an ethical framework for teaching campaign politics to young Americans, one that transcends party or ideologies and unites young political aspirants in a common goal-building ethical leadership and improving campaign politics. If we do not clean up campaign politics all of us will continue to work under a cloud of suspicion, where the public always assumes that we service our own interests before the country's and the ends always justify the means."

-- John McCain, U.S. Senator

"Canada is above all an idea of what a country could be, a place of imagination. In spite of a recurring desire to find outside inspirations, it is very much its own invention."

--John Ralston Saul in his book "Reflections of a Siamese Twin Canada at the end of the Twentieth Century"



Penny Priddy

Establishing Women in Politics... Making a Difference

by Penny Priddy

The theme of the upcoming Women's Campaign School speaks to the fact that women have been getting elected in politics for many years now. This statement does not suggest that there are nearly enough women elected or that there are not still barriers. It does however mean that elected women are no longer novelties. It is time to acknowledge that women are establishing themselves in politics and to talk about how they are making a difference.

The School's keynote speaker for this year will be Alexa McDonough. Ms. McDonough has established herself in politics and has assisted other women to do the same. She was the first woman to lead a major political party at the provincial level in the country. She assumed that position almost twenty-five years ago. She has also won two federal elections and has been the leader of the federal N.D.P.

We have some presenters at the Women's Campaign School who have worked with the school and participants before this year, women such as Elizabeth Cull, former cabinet minister and Linda Reid the MLA from Richmond East

and Minister of State Responsible for Early Development. We also have some new presenters but familiar faces for some of us. Charlene Brisson, Congress Past President, will present a workshop, Speaking and Public Presentation and Pauline Buck, Communication and Media Consultant will talk about Working With The Media. Check with the Congress Website.

While this is in very early stages, we may have an exciting opportunity to work with some women on the east coast of Canada. The Congress has always had an interest in developing the Campaign School in other parts of the country. This would be under the umbrella of the Canadian Women Voters Congress.

This will be an exciting year, with the opportunity of identifying unique contributions women are making in politics, to look at the strategies by which we can accomplish these, and to celebrate those accomplishments.

*Penny Priddy
Councillor, City of Surrey
Co-Chair, Women's Campaign School*



Tera Orchard

Mutual Trust a Must

by Tera Bekattla-Orchard

As a young Aboriginal woman, I am finally gaining a greater understanding of my own culture and of the history of my people. It is important for everyone to have a greater knowledge of the struggles Aboriginal people have encountered throughout history. The battles that are being fought today are based on hundreds of years of mistrust. The general public has a misconception of Aboriginal people and what it is we have a right to expect. This is due mainly to a lack of teaching from the First Nations perspective. A large part of Canadian history is missing from our textbooks. This has to change.

As part of an Ad Hoc Committee to form an Aboriginal Caucus in the PC Party of Canada, I believe change has to come from within the political system. We are aiming to create a strong Aboriginal voice through party politics, which will

evolve if a solid foundation is laid. Trust has got to be built between government and First Nations people. Politicians must have faith in the Aboriginal people and understand that stability can be achieved through self-determination. The healing has begun. But how can the Aboriginal community fully heal if there remains a problem of mutual trust?

I am currently taking a First Nations Studies Degree at the Institute of Indigenous Government. Once having completed this degree, my intent is to proceed with studies in Law, specializing in First Nations relations.

*Tera Bekattla-Orchard
Buffalo River Dene Nation
VP Vancouver East PC Party Riding Association*

Nature vs Nurture – what makes a great politician?

by Charlene Brisson



Charlene Brisson

When asked to write a piece on what characteristics make a good politician, questions flooded my mind. Are great politicians born with these skills or are they learned? Do they always win their first election? Or do they learn how to be elected? Are they naturally admirable speakers? When they were young, did they soapbox with all of the neighborhood children? Or did they fall into their political career and develop the necessary abilities.

Before I could begin to answer any of these questions, I asked a cross section of everyday voters (not political junkies) what they look for in their chosen candidates. The number one answer of 80% of the responders was "honesty". Other traits included trustworthy; moral; communicative; well informed and committed to inform; a good representative of what the community wants; fearless; inclusive; a good speaker; intelligent (but not necessarily overly educated); competent. Values seemed to lead the list in all responses. Other traits that I personally have noticed and often admired as I've witnessed politicians at events, in the media and in one-on-one situations are confidence; charisma; passion, leadership; quick-on-their-feet; realness; empathy; the ability to instantly understand a situation with all of its ramifications and articulate it back in simplistic terms that everyone can understand. And finally, I revere those that are confronted with intense hostility yet maintain a posture of calmness and those faced with what appears to be complete failure, pick themselves up and go right back in.

Having observed the growth of many politicians over the years, I have come to the conclusion that greatness involves a combination of natural abilities and learned skills. I believe that people are born with characteristics like passion, charisma, intelligence and their own unique set of talents. In our early lives we are instilled with values such as honesty, the ability to differentiate

right from wrong, and a social conscience. Through life's lessons we build empathy, compassion and prejudices. Adulthood allows us to work on our shyness, fear of public speaking, our faults and inadequacies. Through education and work experience we develop confidence by building our competency levels. Many can be average representatives, but it takes years, even decades to create a great politician... years of media training, Toastmasters, image development, conflict resolution, facilitation and negotiation seminars, anger management, the building of a network and most importantly practice, practice, practice.

As one of our women campaign school students said after she graduated... I thought I knew how to be a politician, but this School has taught me what I didn't know I didn't know. She was elected in the fall and is on her way. A great politician never underestimates the value of training and being willing to make improvements in themselves. And they understand it takes time and growth.

Ask any elected official if they have improved their trade since they entered the race and I am certain you will hear about one of their most embarrassing moments— how they froze at the microphone, stammered in response to an off the cuff question, got angry and swore at a protester out of rage, wasn't compassionate toward a group that turned on them en masse. Have they improved their skill since being elected— you bet they have. Rome wasn't built in a day and neither were any of our memorable politicians.

Charlene Brisson is Past President of the Canadian Women Voters Congress, graduate of the Yale Women's Campaign School and co-founder, organizer and facilitator of the Women's Campaign School at UBC Robson Square.

Pauline Buck, Congress Publicity Chair says:

“Local Celebrities Needed”

With the 5th annual Women’s Campaign School being just two months away, my thoughts have turned to publicity plans – ways to get the word out to potential participants. Following up on the great coverage we attracted last year about the school, we are happy to welcome PR professional Amy Sept to the Publicity Committee – and we’d like to recruit many of you, too, to help spread the word among your peers.

As part of this year’s publicity strategy we’re going to submit news releases to newspapers and radio stations throughout B.C. But we need input from our grads to do this. Local media need a local angle – a quote from a grad who lives in that city or town. So, if any of you are willing to have your comments included in a news release that may possibly result in a quote appearing in your local paper, please send us information. There are a few questions below to get your creative juices flowing. And who knows – your local paper or radio station may call you for an interview.

Thanks for your help – and happy campaigning in the future. Please send your information by email directly to me, as noted below.

I attended the Women’s Campaign School in the year _____.

I ran for the political office of _____ in _____ (location) _____ in the year _____.

I worked behind the scenes of a campaign _____.

The Women’s Campaign School helped me because _____.

I would recommend the Women’s Campaign School because _____.

Other comments: _____.

I am willing to be interviewed by the media Yes ___ No ___

Please send your publicity information to paulinebuck@telus.net by March 28th, 2003.

Publicity Chair Pauline Buck provides women at Canada Post with information about the Women’s Campaign School during their International Women’s Day celebration.



Education of Girls– High Yield Investment

- Last year, the World Bank identified the education of girls as the key to effective development. Countries that promote women’s rights and increase their access to schooling have lower poverty rates, faster economic growth, and less corruption than countries that do not.
- While high-quality basic education is important for everyone, supporting girls’ education is the single-highest-yielding investment that a developing country can make. Studies show that girls who are educated marry later, have fewer and healthier children, and are better able to care for their families. (Canadian International Development Agency)

Thanks to Homemaker’s magazine: Sponsor of Give Girls A Chance project.

The Sidekick Players Club

Presents

The Canadian Debut of

Mail~Order Annie

by Carl Cashin

Winner of Theatre BC’s prestigious
2001 National Playwriting Competition

Directed by Carroll Lefebvre

March 13, 14, 15, 20, 21 & 22, 2003

8:00 pm

The Genesis Theatre – Ladner

Adults: \$12.00

Seniors/Students \$10.00

Tickets: 604 943-1127

CAST

Laura Sutherland-Smith • Paul Fisher

Al Mason • Amber Hanley



This play is dedicated to the thousands of Mail-Order brides who braved the journey to Canada’s Great Western Plain during the expansion period of 1905-1925. Some came in search of adventure and romance, others a simple home and family. Whatever their reasons, they shaped the future of a nation. The Western Home Monthly, a Winnipeg based magazine with a national circulation, featured a lonely hearts correspondence column, receiving as many as 1500 letters each month. (Note: How about making it “Girls Night Out” in honour of these courageous pioneer women).

Tales of a Spider Girl Continued

by Miriam Tratt – a.k.a., Spider Girl, a.k.a., Congress Webmaster



Miriam Tratt

Why the Web? To some of us, the question seems comparable to "Why the sun?" – we can't imagine life without it. To others, the World Wide Web seems like a daunting and unnecessary distraction. However you view the web there is no denying that it is here to stay.

For the Canadian Women Voters Congress, our website has become an integral part of our organization. It enables us to reach vast amounts of people across Canada and internationally. For example, at last year's Women's Campaign School, three women from Belgrade came to Vancouver, BC to attend our school...they found us online.

- **Stay connected...**

Speaking of the Campaign School, the new schedule for this year's up coming school is available on our site. This comprehensive page lists speakers, the topics that will be covered and much more. In addition, all of our graduates' bios from the last four schools are posted.

- **Network with us...**

Also on our website are great networking possibilities; we created the only pan-partisan listserv to help women who are involved in the political scene to keep up to date.

- **We did the research for you...**

We recognize the web can be an overwhelming place so we narrowed things down a bit by posting some useful links to a selection of helpful sites related to women and politics.

- **Stay current...**

We also post relevant articles and information about women in politics including communiqués. This newsletter is available on our website, as well as all previous editions. And of course, there is lots of information about us...everything from contact information, board of directors and a downloadable membership form.

- **Get connected...**

So don't delay, check us out today www.canadianwomenvoterscongress.org

Write to Spider Girl: miriamtratt@yahoo.ca

OH, THAT CANADA

A vast majority of Americans have no idea about how important Canada is to their economy, says a new survey released by the U.S.-Canada Partnership for Growth. Of 819 Americans asked, only 12 percent knew that Canada is the largest buyer of U.S. goods and services. Top responses included Japan, China, the U.K. and Mexico. Only one percent knew that Canada is the largest supplier of oil and natural gas to the U.S.

–Vancouver Sun Feb. 22/03

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