

Canadian Women
Voters Congress

Campaign



Charlene Brisson

President's Message by Charlene Brisson

It's amazing how much can happen in a few short months and the impact it can have on our lives. The Congress has been teeming with activity. In the fall, we were honoured by a visit from a study delegation of ten women from Ukraine. Their focus was on promoting women's participation in elected and community positions within their country. Headed up by DIYA, (The All-Ukrainian Women's People's Democratic Organization) the delegation visit was one of the benefits of reaching out to the international community. Mary Collins, the Honourary Co-Chair of the Women's Campaign School, writes more in this issue of "Campaign".

other women's groups, rallied 800 volunteers and canvassed 43,000 Serbian women. Their efforts resulted in a 70% voter turnout, 70% of which were women. The women won the vote. This was the beginning of the end for Slobodan Milosevic who refused to step down. Eleven days later he was ousted from power. Voice of Difference regrouped and repeated their efforts for the December 2000 election. This time their focus was to get women elected. Their efforts resulted in 11% of elected representatives being women. They continue to work toward their goal of 30%.

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In November, Joanne Silver, Chair of the Women's Campaign School and I headed to Belgrade, Serbia to meet with The Voice of Difference, a women's group dedicated to increasing the participation of women in government and the political process. Their campaign was launched around the first democratic election ever to be held in Serbia, September 2000. This group of ten women, driven by passion and the desire to be elevated from a repressive and murderous regime, pulled together

Charlene Brisson and Joanne Silver in
Belgrade, Serbia

Carolyn Bennett

Dr. Carolyn Bennett M.P. to speak at Welcoming Alumnae Reception by Joanne Silver

The Women's Campaign School will welcome Dr. Carolyn Bennett, MP and former Chair of the Federal Liberal Women's Caucus as the keynote speaker at this year's opening reception on April 25th. Dr. Bennett is the Member of Parliament for St. Paul's, Ontario and has a long history of advocating the effective inclusion of women in the process within her party and the country. The Campaign School will be held this year at UBC's new Robson Centre Campus - a new venue for us and an exciting change for our students. The Honourary Co-Chairs,

the Hon. Mary Collins and former B.C. Provincial Minister Penny Priddy have provided unending support this year. Penny is emceeing the Welcoming Alumnae Reception and teaching both political and personal image at this year's school. Mary, although in Russia, continues to guide and support us. Congress president, Charlene Brisson will lead the students through the Mock Campaign exercise. This year, we will see some new faces as well as retaining the skill and style of some of the previous lecturers.

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Joanne and Charlene with members of Voice of Difference.



Aleksandra Petrovic-Graonic from Voice of Difference explaining their "Vote of Difference" campaign.

President's Message *continued from page 1*

Not bad when you consider Canada has been at this game a whole lot longer and we're still at only 21% of women represented in the federal government – ranked 26th in the world. Their passion was contagious, I returned inspired with a renewed vision and conviction of purpose. We shared our knowledge about the Women's Campaign School and the importance of giving women the skills to win elections. Three Serbian women will be attending the School in April 2002.

Changes have been in the air for the 4th Annual Women's Campaign School. The Board of Directors is pleased to announce that UBC at Robson Square will be the School's new partner. This is an important step in the future of the School and we look forward to this new relationship with great enthusiasm. The new campus offers a state-of-the-art venue in the heart of the City. The Congress would like to extend our gratitude to Simon Fraser University at Harbour Centre for their valuable support over the past three years.

Be sure to highlight April 25th on your calendar to attend the Welcoming Alumnae Reception also held at UBC at Robson Square. It's a wonderful opportunity to meet some of the most powerful women in BC politics. You can also meet the Alumnae, the new students, and hear our keynote speaker, Dr. Carolyn Bennett (MP) former chair of the Liberal Women's Caucus and a crusader for women's participation in government.

And finally, congratulations to Mary Collins, honorary Co-Chair of the Women's Campaign School. For the next ten months, Mary will be in Cheboksary, Chuvash, Russia with the Resident Project Advisory for the Health Policy Reform Russia project. She has been a tireless supporter of the School since the beginning and will continue to provide her knowledge from afar. Please join the Congress in wishing Mary well as she embarks on her new adventure.

Dr. Carolyn Bennett...

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A selection of this year's program includes:

- Backroom Politics - Elizabeth Cull
- Campaign Strategy - Erin Airton
- First Nations Elections - Chief Kim Baird
- How to Poll and Why - Sue Hammell
- Getting the Nomination - Patty Sahota
- Luncheon Speaker - Adriane Carr
- Making the Decision to Run - Hon. Linda Reid

It is an honour to have Tracy Brillion from the Chief Dan George Centre on the organizing committee this year. Thanks go to Mary, Penny and especially Charlene for their extraordinary commitment to the program.

Register Now!

To register for the Women's Campaign School call 604-878-8228, email us at congress@telus.net or visit our website at www.canadianwomenvoterscongress.org. Please confirm your attendance at the reception. The dates this year are:
 April 25: Welcoming Alumnae Reception, UBC at Robson Square; April 26, 27, 28th: School Sessions also at UBC at Robson Square.

Why Attend The Women's Campaign School?

- Acquire essential skills and confidence required for political life.
- Increase your value as a candidate, or as campaign staff.
- Develop a strong network of alumnae contacts.



Mary Collins

Mary Collins, Honourary Co-Chair, Women's Campaign School

At the January 2001 Women's Campaign School, we were pleased to welcome two representatives from DIYA (the All-Ukrainian Women's People's Democratic Organization). President Tetyana Kondratyuk and Program Coordinator Svitlana Zhdanovych came to Vancouver under the auspices of the Partnerships for Tomorrow program of the Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC). Funding for this program comes from the Canadian International Development Agency CIDA. DIYA has developed a women's political leadership school in Kiev which is also focused on helping women participate more fully in the electoral process. As Honorary Chair of the Congress' Women's Campaign School, I had been invited to speak at the inauguration of the School in Kiev along with Stewart Goodings of Ottawa. As a result of that visit, they encouraged DIYA to apply for support to ACCC in order to participate in the Women's Campaign School in Vancouver. During their

visit to Vancouver, Tetyana and Svitlana with the help of Joanne Silver of the Congress, also held meetings with a number of women's organizations in Vancouver. This experience enabled them to extend the impact of their School in Kiev to a broader audience and to sponsor a Study Program to Canada of a larger group of Ukrainian women in the fall of 2001. This group of ten women were all involved in promoting women's participation in elected and community leadership in Ukraine and during the portion of their visit to Vancouver, also met with Joanne and Charlene Brisson to learn more about the Congress and the Women's Campaign School. The knowledge, friendship and network building which has resulted from these visits has provided significant benefits to DIYA and its members as well as to the Canadian Women's Voters Congress and the Women's Campaign School which has been able to continue to expand its initiatives to include international students at the School.



Penny Priddy

Penny Priddy, Honourary Co-Chair, Women's Campaign School

I am very pleased to take on the position of honorary co-chair of the 2002 Women's Campaign School. I want to acknowledge the work of Darlene Marzari, who for the last three years, has brought her usual passion and skill to the school. I am also pleased to be working again with Mary Collins who brings a broad base of both Canadian and international work to her position.

The Women's Campaign School is a leading edge initiative. It is the only non-partisan campaign school in the country. It has been so successful that women from across Canada and abroad have attended to work and learn together while at the same time developing a network of women that they can call on later for advice and support.

We know it is possible for women to be successful in politics either as candidates or as people who manage campaigns. However we have seen a very small number of women in the role of Premier

and Prime Minister. We must move beyond the exception to the expected.

My municipal and provincial experience tells me that women bring a unique perspective to politics. Women often use a different lens to look at an issue and may have a different relationship to a concern. The Campaign School offers the opportunity to build capacity in order to ensure that women's voices are heard at political tables throughout B.C. and Canada. I have the privilege of leading one of the workshops this year. We often read and hear that in politics 'Image' is everything. Well it isn't everything but it is something. In the workshop we will talk about personal and political image, examine what contributes to this and explore ways to find a balance that is comfortable for you.

I look forward to seeing you at the 2002 Women's Campaign School.

A Troubled Country

Sally Armstrong, Editor at Large of Chatelaine Magazine, gave this commentary on CBC Radio November 1, 2001 and it is presented here with her permission.

Hope isn't a word Afghans have had much use for in 22 years. But today there are whispers of hope throughout the sprawling Diaspora and the wretched refugee camps strung along the border of that very troubled country. "Maybe this time" they say, "just maybe the tide will turn and we can go home." Just imagine. A coalition government that truly represents all sides. A pouring forth of international aid so the country can get back on its feet. An end to the misogynist treatment of women. What would this country look like? For starters, it would include women – not muffled in burqas and hidden away behind purdah walls – women playing the roles they played before the country was thrown into chaos by the Taliban. Women made up 50% of the civil government workers, 40% of the doctors, and 70% of the teachers. They led corporations and non-profit organizations. More than half

the students at Kabul University were women. The ones I met were civil engineers, pharmacists, university professors and nurses. While it is true that less than 20% of the population is educated, and many rural women wore burquas, all that was changing before the Taliban came to power. Since the 1950's women and girls in Kabul and many other parts of the country attended co-educational schools. Moreover there are women's groups actively seeking change within the country. The Taliban claim what they have been doing against women since 1996 is for Islam. But there's not a word in the Koran that supports the cruel treatment and the frightening edicts they have pronounced – that a girl cannot attend school, that a woman cannot work, that women and girls cannot receive health care. Now the Taliban is about to collapse. Now is the hour for diplomats cobbling together a

coalition government to understand the contribution women can make to rebuilding the country, to establishing a peaceful coexistence between the tribes and to repairing the health of the sickest nation in the world today. The women in this devastated country have the skills, the experience and the moxie to get this country back on its feet. The women I met are proud of their Afghan culture, devoted to their Muslim faith and disgusted with those who interpret Islam to their own political ends. Without the women, how can anyone consider a new government legitimate? With them and a lot of aid from the international community, the political landscape and the emotional wreckage of Afghanistan can be forever changed. "Without the women, how can anyone consider a new government legitimate?"

When Women Became Persons

The Canadian Constitution that took effect on July 1, 1867 gave voting rights to all British and Canadian men - but not to women! It was thanks to the efforts of ladies like Nellie McClung and Henrietta Edwards that suffrage gradually became universal.

In 1917 the right to vote in Federal elections was granted to the wives of enlisted men, but extended, after some protest, to all women in 1918. Provincially, women won the right to vote in Alberta, Manitoba and Saskatchewan in 1916; in British Columbia and Ontario in 1917, and in all other provinces, except Quebec, in 1922. Women in Quebec did not vote until 1940. Another emancipation milestone came in 1929 when women were finally recognized as 'Persons' who could hold a federally appointed office, such as a Senate seat. The Governor General's 'Persons Award' is now given to those who work on behalf of Canadian women.

Mark Your Calendar

WCS Welcoming Alumnae Reception
UBC at Robson Square, April 25, 2002

Women's Campaign School (WCS)
UBC at Robson Square, April 26-28, 2002

Municipal Elections

Saskatchewan
(Even #d rural districts) October 2002
Manitoba October 23, 2002
Quebec (1/3 each year) November 5, 2002
Ontario November 13, 2002
British Columbia November 16, 2002
Yukon October 19, 2003
Saskatchewan (Urban) October 25, 2003
P.E.I. November 6, 2003
New Brunswick May 10, 2004
Alberta October 15, 2004

Provincial Elections

British Columbia May 16, 2005

Federal Elections

There are currently five by-elections pending including Calgary South West, the seat of retiring Preston Manning. The Prime Minister's Office has not, at press time, declared the date. For more information phone Elections Canada at 1-800-463-6868 or visit www.elections.ca

Compulsory Voting

Would you turn out on Election Day if there was a penalty for not voting? According to Australian Government Today (Sawer) the cost to the apathetic voter in Australia is \$50.00, and the system seems to work. In 1924, when the legislation was passed, only 59% of the electorate voted. Since then it has always been over 90%.

Use Your Voice to Make a Difference

by Ann Ashley

The efforts of the Serbian women who decided that their voices could make a difference resulted in electing a parliament comprised of 11% women. As the President of the Canadian Women Voters Congress pointed out in her message, Canada can only boast 21%. How do these countries compare with the rest of the world? For aspiring female politicians, the best place to live is Sweden where 42.7% of the lower house seats are held by women. Indeed six northern European countries sweep the board with the highest percentage of women legislators. (It is probably not a coincidence that these countries also enjoy some of the highest living standards in the world.) New Zealand, which ranks seventh was the first Commonwealth country to give women the vote in 1893, but women were slow to take on political careers. The 1980's slogan Girls Can Do Anything (intended to encourage female net-ball teams in New Zealand) seems to have been taken to heart, as now the prime minister, the leader of the opposition, the attorney

general, the chief justice, the governor general, and more than 30% of members of parliament are female. France does not make the top 60, with only 19.9% of MP's being women, however this could soon change dramatically. In 2000 the French government passed a parity law, (unique in Europe) that required all political parties to field an equal number of men and women candidates. The effects of the new law were seen immediately in the local elections that were held in March 2001. Women councillors won almost 50% of the seats, and the number of female mayors also increased. Nearly one third of Prime Minister Jospin's cabinet are women and one of the most powerful, Martine Aubry, who won the mayoralty race in Lille, is a likely candidate to take over his office this year, when Jospin tries for the Presidency. If the Socialists maintain power, the next prime minister of France could be a woman. The United Kingdom has almost the least female proportional representation in Europe with 118 seats out of 659 (17.9%), but this

number did increase from the last election (101). Despite having 112 political parties to choose from, only 60% of an apathetic electorate voted, the lowest turn out since World War I. In the Philippines women comprise 17.8% of elected officials. In Indonesia only 8% of elected officials are women. Yet both have female presidents (Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, and Megawati Sukarno-Putri). Viet Nam and China both outshine Canada at 26% and 21.8% respectively, with Korea only just behind us at 20.1%. Perhaps where we should expect to see more women in politics is the United States, which ties with little Slovakia at 14%. Maybe they need a Voice of Difference too?

For more statistics on Women in National Politics, visit www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm.

Sources

For politics in New Zealand, see *The Province* 22/3/01, & *Guardian Weekly* 26/7/01. For politics in France, also see *Guardian Weekly* 5/4/01, 26/5/01, 21/6/01, 26/10/01.

Leaders of Tomorrow

Do you know a female student who is running for class president?

Do you know a female student who is looking for a challenging career?

Do you know a female student with ability, dedication and compassion?

If so, sign her up for the Women's Campaign School April 25-28, 2002.

Your involvement in the political future of Canada can be as simple as funding a student at the Women's Campaign School. The Congress will be pleased to help facilitate your donation. For more information phone 604-878-8228 or fax 604-688-8106.

Our Voices Must be Joined

by Anne Ashley

In 1944, Dorise Neilsen, Canada's third woman Member of Parliament, wrote in her book *New Worlds for Women...*

"Though I am very proud of the party to which I belong ... I have no desire or intention in this book to assume a partisan attitude. The important thing is that women will need to be a great deal more active in whatever organization or political party they happen to belong to, including my own. Our voices - no matter what our politics - must be joined with those who want to advance to new security in peace time unity, and it can be done."

The aim of the Congress and the Women's Campaign School is to promote and support those women whose efforts at gaining political positions will help all people. The Congress and the School are strictly non-partisan.

"There are two kinds of Government – the one in which the parties aspire to power and thus perpetuate competitiveness in matters of legislation. This system as we have seen it has brought the world to near ruin. The other is the democratically organized group which aims for co-operation to secure justice rather than to compete for power".
Agnes Macphail, Champion of the Underdog, by Rachel Wyatt.

So you really want to get into Politics, but you see obstacles in your way... By Anne Ashley

I Am Too Young. Marie Killens was only 22 when she won the riding of St. Michel, Quebec in 1979.

I Am Too Old. In 1935 Martha Black, the second woman MP campaigned over 200,000 square miles of Yukon Territory, and won her seat in the face of an opposition landslide. She was 70 years old. (Quoted from her book *My Seventy Years*)

I Am Too Poor. No one was poorer than Dorise Neilsen when she fought for the North Battleford seat in 1940. She was even threatened with eviction in mid-campaign by her political adversaries. But by standing up for her rights, she won the support of every poor voter in Saskatchewan. She said in her book *New Worlds for Women* "As long as people are living in poverty, Canada is not a great nation".

I Am a New Canadian. To vote, and to stand for election, a woman only has to be a Canadian citizen. It is not necessary to be born in Canada. Through the efforts of many hard working parliamentary women, all Canadians have the same rights, regardless of their colour, race, creed, fitness level, or gender.

I Am a First Nations Woman. Who else can help Canada understand the concerns of the First Nations people like you.

I Don't Like to Argue. There would be no need to argue, as John Diefenbaker said in 1947, 'If women could determine the future of the world, there would be peace. (Quoted by John Munro in *The Wit & Wisdom of John Diefenbaker*)

I Have a Family. Agnes Macphail, the first woman MP said 'Does this thing never end in a woman being a person and making a contribution in addition to having children?' (From *Agnes Macphail, Champion of the Underdog*, by Rachel Wyatt)

Who Would Vote for Me? Election to Parliament is by the will of the people. If you are an honest candidate with a desire to make the world a better place, people will vote for you.

I Am Not a Well Educated Person. Election to Parliament is not won by competitive examination. Acquiring the skills to run an effective campaign will be gained when you attend the Women's Campaign School. You will also become part of a network of knowledgeable and supportive women.

The Canadian Women Voters Congress is diligently working to encourage and equip women like you for the challenge. So what are you waiting for? Visit our website today at www.canadianwomenvoterscongress.org

Thank You, Kit

by Audrey Paterson

Unless you know Kit Davison really well, you wouldn't have any idea how many women and women's organizations she has helped to achieve their goals and aspirations. The Canadian Women Voters Congress has been blessed (since its inception) with Kit's unwavering faith that the ideals of the Congress, its members, its Women's Campaign Schools of Canada and the goals they strive for are worthy of this exemplary woman's support. The encouragement and support (sometimes monetary) are always given quietly, unobtrusively, with grace, and accepted in the spirit of the giver. And we couldn't be more grateful for the gift of such a friend and mentor. Thank you, Kit, from all of us.



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