



BULLETIN

SECTION DE L'EST: L'ASSOCIATION DES TRAVAILLEUSES ET TRAVAILLEURS SOCIAUX DE L'ONTARIO

✧ Fall / Automne ✧
2009 (Vol. 35 No. 3)
Professional Identity

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and fax numbers, (613) 238-8406 and (613) 238-5913 respectively. Please note that we have a **new email address:**
oasw-eb@bellnet.ca

Please feel free to contact us if you have questions or concerns, or if you would like to attend a Board meeting. Meetings are held the third Wednesday of the month either at Heartwood House or the Royal Ottawa Mental Health Centre on Carling Avenue.

On this year's Board, Kathy Stiell is our Vice-President, Operations, while Julie Stevenson and Bill Dare share the responsibility of Board Secretary. Glenn Drover is our Treasurer and Past President. Laurie Alphonse is Chair of Membership. Martha Wiebe is our representative from the Carleton University School of Social Work, and is a member of the Publications Committee for the *Bulletin*. Ann-Marie O'Brien is our Provincial Board representative, and Bill Dare is responsible for Information Communication Technology (ICT).

MSW student Elizabeth Snieder has recently joined the Board from Carleton University as a student member. We are looking forward to her participation on the Board. A student representative from the University of Ottawa is yet to be appointed.

We are seeking a new Chair for the Program Committee as regretfully, Valerie Morinville has had to step down from that post. If you know of a student from the Ottawa University School of Social Work who would like to sit as a student Representative on our Board, and/or a member

EASTERN BRANCH NEWS

PRESIDENT'S REPORT - FALL 2009

The first Board meeting of the fall was held on September 16 at Heartwood House, 153 Chapel Street, Ottawa K1N 1H5. With relocation, we were fortunate to maintain our same telephone

Bulletin

The Official Publication of the Branch

Le Bulletin est publié trois fois par année : Fall/Automne, Spring/Printemps, Summer/Été. The Publication Committee welcomes submissions that examine public health and social issues, discuss local, regional or provincial issues in social work/social welfare, or which share social work information of interest to social workers or the social service public.

Le comité de publication accepte les articles pertinents traitant de questions relatives au travail social/ bien-être social, sur les plans local, régional ou provincial ainsi que d'information d'intérêt public ou professionnel. Preferred length is **500 words** (650 words **maximum**). **All articles require a précis!**

Submissions may be e-mailed to the address below. They must be in an IBM-compatible word processing format.

Subscription Price: Members and Non-members \$12. Single issues: \$4.

Classified ads/Annonces : Cost/coût : Full page \$90. Half page \$60. Quarter page \$30. Deadline /date limite : le 17 octobre, le 17 février et le 17 mai.

Contact Graeme Roderick at (613) 226-7081, or request an ad circular from the Branch Office at (613) 238-8406.

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Translator: H. Balthazar
Editor: D.A. Davidson

Send submissions and ads by e-mail to/faire parvenir soumissions et annonces par courriel à :

oasw-eb@bellnet.ca
(NEW!)

THE BULLETIN FOR SPRING 2010

“Providing Social Work Services in Difficult Times”

Deadline for submissions: February 17, 2010.
Your news, articles and ideas for this issue
are welcomed.

who would be interested in heading up the Program Committee, please get in touch with us.

At our September meeting we identified a number of priorities for 2009-10 such as strengthening our relationship with the provincial office of the Association and determining ways to better engage our members. At our October and November meetings, we “fleshed out” these priorities with information gathered from Laurie Alphonse who attended the October 2009 OASW Board meeting in Toronto. You can share your ideas by getting in touch with us.

Our new administrative assistant Emilia Perri started work for us the last week of November. She also volunteers at the Aphasia Centre. Emilia, we are delighted to have you on board!

We are accepting nominations for this year's Joan Gullen media award. The Award recognizes excellence in in-depth reporting on social welfare issues in both the large and small print media serving Eastern Ontario communities.

Nominations are also being sought for this year's recipient of the Bessie Touzel Award. Additional details on both of these awards are provided in this issue of the *Bulletin*.

Our 2010 Gala/AGM will be held in April, date to be determined. This event is an excellent venue for our members to learn more about Branch affairs and network with colleagues. Volunteers for the organizing committee would be warmly welcomed. Please contact Martha Weibe through our Branch office.

Barbara Merriam, President

OASW RESTRUCTURES

OASW PROVINCIAL BOARD MEETING OCTOBER 16-19, 2009

OASW held a Provincial Board meeting in Toronto which I attended in place of Ann-Marie O'Brien. This was first time I have had the opportunity to attend and the meeting was one of mixed emotions. While it was my first time attending, my enthusiasm was tempered with the uncertainty felt by other Branches as OASW Provincial Office embarks on a new Board structure. The new structure taking effect in 2010

will see the majority of Board business done by teleconference as a cost-saving measure, which meant this was the last face-to-face meeting for many members.

The structure and role of the Branches are changing as well. OASW is introducing the position of regional representative into the structure to streamline reporting between the Branches and the Provincial Office. The position of regional representative will be an elected one, with the election process being managed by the Provincial Office. The election process will be initiated this coming spring.

There was also a change in the way that Branches will receive their funding allocations. Beginning in 2010, 10% of Branch funding will be held back for a special events fund. Branches may have access to that money under newly created special events funding criteria. These new changes are not only efforts to cut costs but also to increase the engagement of membership at local levels.

The OASW is meeting challenges of member recruitment and retention with outreach to schools of social work and marketing campaigns to social workers already in the field. This is in keeping with its recruitment and retention strategy.

OASW also continues to make strides in government relations and fosters its relationship with CASW. OASW has been active in lobbying CASW to reconsider a member fee increase that would see OASW pay over \$20,000 more annually to its national counterpart. OASW is participating in discussions to further assess the need for the proposed fee increases.

Discussions about communication in the digital age were of keen interest to Branches. Different ideas were proposed at the Branch meeting and brought forward to the Board meeting. However, Provincial Office is reluctant to embark on any major changes to its current digital e-bulletin format because of the additional resources required to manage digital media. In print however, the Provincial Office was proud to unveil an updated *Elder Abuse Handbook*. It may be ordered online at www.oasw.org.

Under this new structure Eastern Branch may have an advantage. The geographical catchment area for our Branch does not change and we, as a Branch, are already active. With perseverance and innovation we will weather the uncertainty that comes with this new structure.

Laurie Alphonse
Acting Branch Representative to OASW

MANAGING THE BRANCH'S FINANCES AS OASW RESTRUCTURES

by Glenn Drover

Note to the Reader: *In last Summer's issue of the **Bulletin** Glenn Drover, our outgoing President and Ann-Marie O'Brien, our Representative to the OASW Provincial Board, summarized OASW's restructuring from their perspectives. In this and the next issue(s), the **Bulletin** will keep you informed of developments from both Branch and Provincial perspectives.*

*In the **print** version of this Issue, the Branch perspective is taken through the lens of our Treasurer. In our **electronic** version, Ann-Marie identifies some of the forces that shaped the direction now being implemented. Ann-Marie's article will appear in our next print issue. For those interested in advancing opinions or ideas, send your views to our Editor, who will share them with Ann-Marie and Glenn.*

The Branch is solvent. We had \$7,558 in the current account in October.

We received fewer funds this year from the provincial office because of restructuring. In response, we have cut administrative costs and have only very recently hired a paid part-time office assistant. Before that, the work was done by volunteers, which made the day to day operation of the Branch somewhat inefficient. Phone and office equipment are kept at Heartwood House.

Unfortunately, we also have had no independent accountant to check our accounts since last December, so we are behind in reporting our financial status to the provincial office. We are required to report semi-annually. Luckily, we

recently obtained the services of an accountant so we will be able to report at the end of the year. In the interim, the provincial office may hold back a quarterly payment.

The lower level of funding from OASW membership fees and the semi-annual 'audit' of the Branch is a consequence of restructuring by the provincial office. They may appear to be small matters to individual members (indeed they are), but they are indicative, I think, of a centralized 'surveillance' style of management which curbs independent initiative at the Branch level. Maybe that will work for the majority.

In the meantime, it is probably useful to keep in mind some suggestions made by one of our members. Since final changes to OASW come into effect in 2010, the following initiatives remain within our sphere of influence. The first is to make sure that we continue to have some influence over the person who represents Eastern Branch on the provincial board. Another is to make a strong case for the importance of the Council of Branches (which is not in the provincial bylaws). A third is to plan the role which Eastern Branch plays in the 2010 regional election. A fourth is to make certain that our own bylaws reflect the changes caused by restructuring.

While the above suggestions are not directly related to the responsibilities of the Treasurer, they will, if implemented, make them more explicit as well as providing an avenue to redress ongoing financial concerns with the provincial office.

Glenn Drover, Treasurer

TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER!

by Ann-Marie O'Brien

Editor's Note: *As we have more space in the Internet version of the Bulletin, Ann-Marie's article concerning the events leading up to the restructuring of OASW has been included here. It will provide you with a point of comparison with Glenn Drover's article on the financial impacts of the restructuring of OASW.*

Our professional association consists of 15 Branches with 3,800 members. We are a large, diverse group of social workers. We were incorporated in 1964 and have weathered many storms and made significant advances. Each threat and opportunity has required us to make tough choices about who we are and what we value.

The most recent threat to the profession came in 2006. The Ontario government introduced legislation to regulate the practice of psychotherapy. Regulation of this intervention is long overdue and a good thing. However, the proposed legislation excluded social workers. A detailed explanation of why this was problematic for social workers and our association is beyond the scope of the current discussion. Suffice it to say our successful advocacy campaign was unbudgeted and a debt was incurred. The lesson learned from this exercise was that we as an association needed to find different ways to effect change in regard to advocating for the profession and the people we serve. And so the Board hired a government relations consultant to help us attain this goal.

While advocacy for inclusion in the *Psychotherapy Act, 2007* was successful and significantly raised the profile of the profession and the association, the Provincial Board recognized that as part of the process of addressing the debt, we needed to review our values, priorities and how we spend our money. The Board structure hadn't been reviewed since 1964; nor had the role and function of Branches been reviewed since 1991. Bringing together 27 people three times a year was expensive, and out of step with current practices of other professional associations.

In keeping with the profession's values of diversity and inclusion, an Organizational Review Task Group was struck in the spring of 2008 with representatives from Branches across the province and members of the Executive Committee of the Provincial Board. Their mandate was to examine the future role and function of the Branches and the optimal size and composition of the Provincial Board.

The Task Group met via teleconference on a regular basis. Consultations were held with the

Branches in the spring and fall of 2008 regarding their role and core functions; extensive information was gathered from sister associations across Canada and within Ontario regarding their organizational structure and governance model. The Task Group also submitted formal reports to the Provincial Board at each Board meeting throughout 2008 and 2009 and input was sought during Provincial Branch Affairs meetings held in conjunction with Provincial Board meetings. We discussed, debated and made informed decisions based on due diligence.

By June 2009 our Task Group had developed three governance options, which were presented to the Board and resulted in a decision to reduce the board to 15 members. The new governance model is composed of five elected Executive Committee members; ten elected Board members made up of seven Regional Directors and three elected/appointed positions (CASW Director, Francophone Director and Student Director). For Eastern Branch, this means that the Regional Director will be elected by the entire membership instead of being appointed by the Eastern Branch Board.

Concurrently, our Task Group looked at expenditures to the Branches based upon consensus by the Branches on their core functions. These included:

- Coordinating activities related to National Social Work Week;
- Partnering with local schools of social work to host events, support advocacy, etc.;
- Reaching out to students to raise the profile of OASW and encourage them to join the Association and become active in the Branch;
- Providing updates related to OASW initiatives;
- Preserving a structure to conduct advocacy should issues such as Bill 171 arise.

In reviewing Branch allocations, our Task Group asked Branches to provide information on their expenditures. We found remarkable diversity between Branches. However the Task Group supported the Branches' need to have flexibility in spending as a result of regional and demographic differences, as well as preferences in how services are delivered and issues

addressed as long as spending adhered to the following guiding principles:

- Activities need to increase the visibility of the Association.
- Activities need to be cost effective reflecting good value to members.
- Transparency and accountability for use of funding are essential
- Outcomes are measurable, and reflect the purpose of activities and what will be achieved.

In June 2009 our Board approved a revised funding formula for the Branches. Branches would receive 90% of the funding that they received in 2008, and 10% will be reserved for 'special projects'. The OASW Budget, Finance and Audit Committee will review applications for 'special projects', based on the guiding principles above.

We in Eastern Ontario have a very vibrant Branch with a rich history steeped in social justice. While we bring our expertise and vision to the OASW collective, our reality is exceptional. This new configuration will not diminish our strength or our commitment to social justice. Social workers in other parts of the province support this new configuration, and believe it will guide them to experience the vibrancy that we have achieved.

Ann-Marie O'Brien is our Branch Representative to OASW.

NEW MEMBERS

Eastern Branch welcomes new members

Colleen Barnes, Jennifer Williams, Keara Dean, Stephanie Parker, Cindy Morrow, Heather D. Galley, Manon Crevier, Allison Lynn La Vigne, Carol Smith, Cindy Blackstock, Eva Marta Czechowicz, Mark David Friedman, Roxane Beauchamp, David Murphy, Shannon Sommerauer, Allen Morrison, Janet Theobald, Jeannette Ouellette, Joscelyne Levesque, Julie Simard, Kathleen Szirtes, Marie Perry, Noah Spector, Sheena Taylor, and Erin Richards.

Welcome back to Prudence Oreggio, Jane Mahoney, Rita Finnigan, Heather McKeown and Marian Johns.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS 2010- 2011

Get involved with your Branch!

The election of new members of the Board of Directors will take place at the **Annual General Meeting** portion of our **Spring Gala** in April 2010. The term of office is for two years.

Please submit your candidature for the Board or the name of a nominee to the Branch office by e-mail at oasw-eb@bellnet.ca or by regular mail (address on back cover) **no later than April 1, 2010.**

APPEL DE NOMINATIONS POUR L'ANNEE 2010- 2011

Engagez-vous dans l'œuvre de la Section de l'est!

L'élection des nouveaux membres du Conseil d'administration aura lieu à **l'Assemblée générale annuelle** à notre **Soirée gala du printemps** en avril 2010. La durée du mandat est de deux ans.

Vous pouvez soumettre votre candidature ou celle d'un membre au bureau de la Section par courriel à oasw-eb@bellnet.ca ou par la poste (l'adresse se trouve au verso) **avant le 1 avril 2010.**

AWARDS: CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

BESSIE TOUZEL AWARD 2010

The Bessie Touzel Award recognizes social workers who have demonstrated both leadership and vision in the practice of social work and who have contributed to the Ontario Association of Social Workers.

The Award is named for Bessie Touzel (1904 - 1997). About her, the *Canadian Association of Social Work* wrote, "The one constant theme throughout her career was that of advocacy for the poor and dispossessed, especially mothers and their children." *The Encyclopedia of Social Welfare* noted, "She was active on the Service Standards Committee where she led the fight for

standards of practice that respected the dignity of clients, such as increased relief rates."

The call for Nominations for the 2010 Bessie Touzel Award is open until **March 5, 2010**. Your submission must include a clear statement of the reasons why you are nominating a particular member of OASW for the award, along with a completed nomination form (available from the Branch Office by calling us at (613) 238-8406), the nominee's resumé, and any other relevant supporting documents (optional). Please submit your nomination to the Branch Office (address on back cover).

For more information, please contact Virginia Lafond by telephone at (613) 722-6521 ext. 6610, or by e-mail at virginialafond@rogers.com

LE PRIX BESSIE TOUZEL 2010

Le prix Bessie Touzel reconnaît les membres de la profession qui ont fait preuve de leadership et de vision dans la pratique du service social et qui ont contribué à l'ATTSO.

Le prix a été créé en mémoire de Bessie Touzel (1904-1997), au sujet de qui l'*Association Canadienne des travailleuses et travailleurs sociaux* a écrit que « le thème qui traverse sa carrière est celui de la défense des droits des pauvres et des plus démunis, plus particulièrement les mères et leurs enfants. » *L'Encyclopédie du Bien-être Social* rapport qu'au Comité des Services relatifs aux normes, Bessie Touzel a mené la lutte pour l'établissement de normes dans la pratique du travail social, afin d'assurer le respect de la dignité des clients, qui se traduirait notamment en prestations de bien-être adéquates.

L'appel de nominations pour le prix Bessie Touzel, 2010, est lancé **jusqu'au 5 mars 2010**. Votre soumission doit comporter les raisons justifiant la nomination d'un membre et être accompagnée du formulaire approprié, de son cv et de tout autre document jugé pertinent. Veuillez téléphoner au numéro (613) 238-8406 pour obtenir ce formulaire. Les documents de mise en nomination doivent être postés au Bureau du chapitre de l'Est, dont l'adresse se trouve à la dernière page du *Bulletin*. Pour de plus amples

renseignements, veuillez vous adresser à Virginia Lafond, par téléphone au 613) 722-6521, poste 6610 ou par courriel à virginialafond@rogers.com.

JOAN GULLEN ANNUAL AWARD

This year's recipient of the **Joan Gullen Award for Media Excellence** for in-depth reporting on social welfare issues will be formally recognized during **Social Work Week** in March, 2010.

Joan Gullen is a Bessie Touzel Award winner, and a recipient of a Governor General's Citation. She is a social justice advocate, and a member of the Branch.

There are two categories for the Award. One will be given to large print media which serve cities and towns of Eastern Ontario. A second Award is to be given to small print media which serve ethnic, language, neighborhood and/or religious communities in Eastern Ontario.

The Award consists of a citation, and a monetary prize donated to a local charity of the winner's choice.

To be eligible for the Award, a nominee must have produced an article or series that:

- covered social welfare, social concerns and social policy issues of local import;
- used extensive research, case studies, and viewpoints of local or provincial service providers;
- and/or reported on research findings by North American experts;
- made reference to local agencies; and
- called for action.

Nominations must be received in the Branch Office (see address on back cover) **by January 22, 2010**.

LE PRIX ANNUEL JOAN GULLEN

Le prochain récipiendaire du **prix Joan Gullen pour excellence médiatique**, destiné à un individu ayant réalisé un reportage en profondeur sur un sujet lié au bien-être social, sera formellement honoré durant **la semaine du travail social**, en mars 2010.

Joan Gullen a reçu le prix Bessie Touzel ainsi qu'une citation du Gouverneur Général. Elle est aussi reconnue pour son militantisme face aux questions de justice sociale. Elle est un membre de notre Section.

Le prix comporte deux catégories. L'un sera décerné au représentant d'un média à grand format qui dessert les villes et villages de l'est de l'Ontario. L'autre est destiné à un média plus petit publié dans diverses langues ou s'adressant à des communautés ethniques, ou des groupes religieux dans l'Est de l'Ontario.

Le prix comprend une citation et une somme d'argent destinée à un organisme de charité choisi par le récipiendaire.

Pour être éligible au Prix, un candidat doit avoir réalisé un ou une série d'articles répondant aux critères suivants :

- traiter de questions de bien-être, de préoccupations sociales et de politiques sociales d'intérêt local ;
- s'appuyer sur des recherches approfondies, des études de cas, et les points de vue de pourvoyeurs de services au niveau municipal ou provincial ;
- et/ou rapporter des résultats de recherches effectuées par des experts nord américains;
- se référer à des agences locales ; et
- inviter à poser des gestes concrets.

Vos choix de candidatures doivent être soumis au bureau de la Section (adresse au verso) **avant le 22 janvier 2010**.

COMMITTEES

SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

In June 2009, a presentation was made to Ottawa's Finance and Economic Affairs Committee in support of a motion to ban future arms trade exhibitions on City property. In spite of many impassioned arguments in favour, the motion was defeated. However, a motion to consolidate the numerous City branches responsible for housing and homelessness, which we had urged councillors to support, did pass at Council.

In September, the committee was represented at a consultation on the Ottawa Municipal Poverty Reduction Strategy. The report and recommendations of the consultation meeting were made available in November and the Poverty Reduction Strategy was presented to Ottawa City Council on December 3. Community support for the final recommendations will be extremely important.

In collaboration with *People for a Better Ottawa*, the committee will monitor and respond to draft documents for the 2010 Ottawa City Budget, beginning at the end of October.

Sub-committees continue to work on the following issues:

- A municipal income tax proposal to be presented to Ottawa City Council.
- A plan of action to address concerns regarding the care provided to vulnerable residents of domiciliary hostels and other such publicly-supported homes.

Social Justice Committee meetings are held once a month on a Wednesday evening. Any member who would like to join the committee should contact margn@magma.ca for details of the meeting date, the agenda and the meeting location.

Margaret Nelson
Chair

SOCIAL WORK IN AGING AND GERONTOLOGY (SWAG)

ARE YOU A SOCIAL WORKER INTERESTED IN SENIOR'S ISSUES AND WORK WITH THE ELDERLY?

Eastern Branch OASW sponsors a network for Social Work in Aging and Gerontology (SWAG). All professionals in social work or related fields of practice are welcome to attend any of the meetings. There is no cost and no official "membership" except a common concern about issues related to aging. Meetings are kindly hosted by Colonel By Retirement Residence, 43 Aylmer Avenue (near Sunnyside) and always feature a speaker on a topic of interest to Ottawa social workers. Meetings are always held on a Thursday from 3:30 PM to 5:00 PM.

If you want to get on the SWAG distribution list, or confirm the topic of the month, e-mail beverlee.mcintosh+swag@gmail.com.

SOCIAL WORK WEEK

NATIONAL SOCIAL WORK WEEK IS
MARCH 1-7, 2010

The OASW theme for Social Work Week 2010 is:

"Poverty: There are Solutions – Social Workers Make a Difference"

For more information, please check the OASW Web site at <http://oasw.org>.

ERRATUM:

The **Table of Contents** of the Summer 2009 issue of the *Bulletin* erroneously listed the title of Reuel Amdur's *Editorial* as, "What's wrong with Social Work in Ontario?" The title should have read, "What's Wrong with Social Assistance in Ontario?"

Our apologies for the error.

Editor

RECOGNIZING OURSELVES IN THE BIGGER PICTURE REVISITED

Until now, the last issue of the *Bulletin* to explore the theme of professional identity was the Fall/Winter 2002. Its editorial entitled, *Recognizing Ourselves in the Bigger Picture*,¹ looked at societal trends that were evident at the beginning of the 1990s and their impact upon the profession. The editorial drew upon an article¹ written by Joan Mackenzie Davies which said, "If we are to grow and develop, we will need to learn from the context within which we practice, and to utilize this experience to shape our future". Joan said that as a profession and as an Association, we must address the marginalization of social work. She was optimistic about our ability to do so.

To answer the question whether by the end of the 1990s the profession had put that concern to rest, three significant documents can be utilized. In November 1999, l'Ordre professionnel des travailleurs sociaux du Québec released a report entitled *Social Work at the Dawn of the Third Millennium*. The following year, CASW and CASSW released *In Critical Demand: Social Work in Canada*. In 2002, CASW released a monograph on the *Montreal Social Work Forum*, which highlights the recommendations of a gathering of representatives from across the country from practice, regulation and education. Each document affirms Joan's observation that the profession 'had issues', these being a reflection of societal and workplace changes and changing dynamics within the profession. In short, at the end of the 1990s, the concern had not been put to rest. Indeed the task appeared arduous.

M. Stephenson of the Canadian Sector Study² best summarized their document's thrust. She said our profession was at a nexus. The context was trends towards devaluing our services and

using others to do traditional social work, as well as no well recognized 'unique' skills. The increasing presence of standards of practice and accountability achieved through regulation was viewed as a plus. Stephenson said a necessary ingredient for strengthening our sector was the development of a coherent, clearly-defined identity.

The Montreal Social Work Forum took up where these two initiatives left off. It concluded that collaboration between the bodies representing practice, regulation and education Branches was an essential requisite in consolidating and advancing our own sense of identity, in portraying ourselves to our colleagues from other disciplines and to society, as well as in influencing the image the community has of who we are.

It may be self-evident that collaboration was essential, but that Forum was the first time that representatives of the 'Branches' of the profession had come together nationally. Participants agreed that collaboration was imperative. To remain relevant to others, and to recruit as well as retain our workforce, coherence and clarity in what our profession means by being and acting as a social worker was a must. However, also recognized was that we should resist adopting a utilitarian approach, and a mechanistic view. How can identity best be inculcated, nurtured and enhanced? How can the perceptions of others regarding social work best be shaped? Could you and I help?

In ascertaining what needed to be fixed, the Forum acknowledged the existence of different languages of discourse within each Branch across the country and between Branches, and the poor communication and under-developed linkages between Branches as well as turf-guarding on such issues as who sets professional standards. Also acknowledged was the public's misunderstanding of social work and social workers. Is there any wonder!

More than an Image Fix

While a number of priorities were identified, Forum participants saw protecting and enhancing our professional identity was near the top. One surmises that having "coherence" and "clarity" would make the task of protection and enhancement easier to realize.

¹ Strategic directions for social work and OASW in the '90s, *Newsmagazine*, Summer 1993, pg. 4.

² In *Critical Demand: Social Work In Canada* – strategic human resources analysis of the social work sector, 2000.

The need for coherence and clarity ought to suggest demonstrated joint or co-ordinated action and benchmarks by the Branches of our profession, presumably provincially and nationally. To promote and enhance professional identity, the Forum agreed (pg. 26) to achieve:

- ✓ a common definition of social work and scope of practice;
- ✓ a common definition of competencies, distinctive or unique expertise;
- ✓ awareness of one another's standards of practice;
- ✓ a common definition of mandatory registration and its pursuit thereof;
- ✓ a shared culture of continuing education, mutually recognized by Branches;
- ✓ mutual support, web-based technologies being a promising tool;
- ✓ pro-active use of media to communicate the meaning and value of social work to the public;
- ✓ advocacy of social workers in unions, and with and among employers.

The Forum realized that if the Branches could not get their collective act together, externalities would intrude and compel us to do so. And not necessarily on our terms. For instance, the 1994 *Agreement on Internal Trade and Labour Mobility* would result in harmonization of standards across the country. On April 1, 2009, **AIT** Chapter 7's 9th Protocol came into effect. Certification for an occupation by a regulatory body of one province was in effect recognition of those credentials in all other provinces and territories.

While space does not permit an analysis of progress made in each benchmark on this list, a May 2008 report on the Intersectoral Initiative (practice, regulation and education) stated that agreement had been achieved on continuing education – delivery, evaluation and monitoring could be an area for potential collaboration. From reading the Monograph, one might ask whether that step had not been agreed upon in 2001. Perhaps this not a good example of progress.

Conclusion:

Gayle Gilchrist James' call to 'reclaim your proud heritage' remains equally true today. She said orient and reorient yourselves to the fundamental

perspective of social work- *person in the environment*.

*"A distinct hazard of specialization is that one can become so immersed in one's field, that the big picture is forgotten"*³.

In the last decade, members of the Editorial Committee and contributors have sought to reinforce your and our sense of connection to the profession on issues related to practice and education relevant to Eastern Ontario. While Gayle's counsel to 'Think big, do small' was not on our minds, it has been the way this committee has acted. Of the decade's thirty issues, the themes of *half* were on 'focuses' or 'fields' of practice such as local health care, and children and families. A *third* of the issues have been on 'methods of practice' such as clinical, community development or social policy, while the *remainder* were on professional matters such as continuing education and professional identity. The Issues on the Sixtieth Anniversary of the *Bulletin*, local Students' Perspective and Environmental Matters stand out as exceptional.

Join in saluting the members of the Editorial Committee of the OASWEastern Branch over the past decade. In particular recognition is given to Bessie Touzel recipients Joyce Ireland, Dorothy Hodgson and Ruth Brown. Their continued identification with our profession a decade or more after retirement gives testament to social work being not just a job; it has remained their profession⁴. Their and other retirees' sustained and creative contributions to the Eastern Branch reminds each of us that through our Association, one can indeed influence as well as mirror the bigger picture, and contribute to the clarity and coherence of our profession's identity.

Editorial Committee

³ How did we get from 'then' to 'now', OASW *Newsmagazine*, Spring 1997 p. 4. Gayle was a former president of CASW and the International Federation of Social Workers.

⁴ It's just a job: No, it's my profession, OASWEastern Branch *Bulletin* Winter 1996 pg. 1.

MAINTAINING PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY IN AN INTERPROFESSIONAL SETTING

by Karen Nelson

Précis : Les travailleuses sociales travaillant dans un milieu interprofessionnel sont confrontées à de nombreux défis pouvant poser obstacle à la reconnaissance de leur identité professionnelle : ceux-ci peuvent comprendre l'absence de compréhension du rôle du travail social de la part d'autres professionnels et la nature parfois moins concrète ou moins visible de leur travail. L'auteure propose des pistes pour favoriser le maintien et la promotion du rôle du travail social en contexte interdisciplinaire, tels que l'appui de recherches soutenant l'intervention, l'éducation continue de collègues d'autres disciplines face à son rôle et l'engagement dans des tâches et des rôles de leadership au sein de son organisme.

Now, more than ever, the buzzword in health and social service agencies is interprofessional care. Social workers are adept at collaboration and possess the communication skills to work well with others, so working interprofessionally should be a natural fit. In fact, many social workers find the experience of working on a team of different professionals to be more stimulating and exhilarating than practicing in a single discipline setting. Mizrahi and Abramson (2000) point out that health care institutions are recognizing that interdisciplinary collaboration is an essential element of both effective patient care and organizational survival.

Regardless of how skilled a social worker is, maintaining an identity in an interprofessional environment is a challenge. Levin and Herbert note that, "The need for social workers to clarify their roles and ensure that those roles are valued...has never been more pressing". Social work is misunderstood by lay persons and society at large (Lecroy and Stinson, 2004). But it is also misunderstood by other professionals who bring with them assumptions about what social work is. This is different from the experience the public commonly has with other disciplines. Many professionals have had their own personal interfaces with different disciplines by being the recipient of physiotherapy treatments, operated on by a surgeon, or cared

for by a nurse. Far fewer have had experiences with social workers.

Added to this lack of understanding of the social work discipline is the fact that social work has no "controlled acts". That is, there is nothing we do that legislation bars others from taking on. Most of our work is done without visible tools and behind closed doors. Our interventions are a mystery to others who can demonstrate what they do with patients and clients using equipment or in an overt manner. We have no needles or walkers or stethoscopes. Our interventions often appear to consist mainly of "chatting", causing others to feel that it is not hard to duplicate.

Marett et al (1998), note that when interdisciplinary teams are organized, they tend to be formed on the basis of convenience, i.e. whoever is available and willing determines who is included on the team. Such a method often results in the overlap of abilities, duplication of services, and/or gaps in the delivery of services. Davis (2004) points out the problem of differentiating the role of the social worker in a multi-disciplinary team. Many social work activities are shared by other professionals, making it difficult for social workers to claim a particular role in supporting patients and families. It creates difficulties in defining the role of social workers and the boundaries of accountability.

In most interprofessional settings, social workers work alone on a team. This makes the challenge of communicating and demonstrating the social work role even greater as the responsibility falls on the shoulders of each social worker alone. Junior social workers may be influenced to accept a role defined by others instead of by social work. Team members often change and so it may feel that the social worker is continually educating others on the role of social work.

On most teams, social workers will find themselves reporting to someone who is not a social worker. This again places considerable responsibility on the individual social worker to not only be astute clinically, but able to effectively market their role and their contribution to care in order to avoid being overlooked or undervalued. How best can social workers communicate their role and their scope of practice given the

pressure on teams to fulfill a role as prescribed by others? Berger (1991) points out that, "in order to be effective clinicians and administrators, social workers need to add to their clinical and management skills, nurtured and refined political skills". Globerman goes further in maintaining that "social workers must clearly define their role, document what they do, and let administrators know their worth..." (Globerman, 1996).

Given this climate and the potential bonuses for clients who receive interprofessional care, social workers must determine how they can best ensure their survival by claiming the practice areas that they alone are specialists in. In health care, for instance, social workers are uniquely focused on the Social Determinants of Health (Raphael, 2004). Others on the team may focus on the psychological or the physical, but social workers work with those elements in the client's social surroundings and in society that are impacting their health.

There are other specific activities social workers can engage in to maintain their identity and thrive in the presence of other professionals:

1. Understand the research supporting the interventions used by social work. Be able to articulate how interventions chosen are grounded in research findings.
2. Engage in educational activities with new staff, students, and all manner of professionals in an effort to help others to fully understand the training and skill set of social workers.
3. Invest in supervision. All new grads as well as staff working in complex areas need clinical social work supervision to anchor their practice in the established theoretical frameworks and proven clinical interventions.
4. Articulate clearly the role for social work and actively resist tasks which violate the Code of Ethics or do not reflect the professional status of social work.
5. Determine how best to have a voice in the organization to bring an understanding of the social work role to decision makers beyond the team.
6. Strive to take on leadership roles. Typically managers of teams are non-social work professionals, but social workers do possess the skills needed to be effective managers and leaders.
7. Pay attention to what the organization's priorities and needs are, and ensure that social work's activities reflect an understanding of these. Social workers still need to use the skills of advocacy and advancing social change. This can occur more effectively when they have gained the credibility necessary to be taken seriously within the organization by pointing out how they help the organization to achieve its goals.
8. Be ready to market the unique skills that social workers bring to clients, families and teams. No one can or will do this as effectively as social workers themselves.

Defining our role and maintaining a strong professional identity on an interprofessional team is part of the job for social workers who choose to work in an interdisciplinary model. Given that this model can provide benefits for the clients we serve, it is our professional responsibility to take this on with determination and enthusiasm.

Karen Nelson is Chief of Social Work and Director of Spiritual Care at the Ottawa Hospital.

Note: Anyone interested in obtaining the bibliography for this article can contact our office at atoasweb@bellnet.ca or call us at 613 238-8406.

**PROMOTING PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY:
A HIGH PRIORITY FOR OASW
AND ITS MEMBERS**
by Gillian McCloskey

Precis: L'ATTSO assume de plus en plus son rôle de leadership en ce qui a trait à la promotion de l'identité professionnelle. L'association peut fournir les moyens, mais les membres de la profession doivent nécessairement s'engager dans le processus visant clarifier l'essence de leur pratique afin de déterminer ce qui constitue leur unique contribution. Cet article donne

quelques exemples des activités/initiatives entreprises par l'association pour atteindre ce but.

As we all know, social work is a well-established and dynamic profession; however, rapid change and uncertainty are hallmarks of the human and health services delivery systems. Consequently, social work is continually challenged by issues to clarify and promote its professional identity, and the compelling reasons to establish clear roles for social workers include:

- the breadth of the profession;
- the legislation of social work (protection of title) in Ontario in 1998, and the movement by a number of organizations to change title, fuelled by budget constraints, enabling employers to hire non-social workers and reduce salaries;
- the expanding, overlapping and blurring of roles within inter-professional settings
- the introduction of the *Psychotherapy Act, 2007*, and the accompanying implications for social workers; and
- the depletion of traditional organizational structures that provide supports for individual social workers such as supervision/mentoring within the same discipline, or erosion of social work departments within hospitals with the program management model.

Increasingly, OASW is playing a leadership role in promoting professional identity. The Association provides the vehicles, but it is vital for members of the profession to actively engage in this process and to clarify on an ongoing basis what they do and their unique contribution. The following are just a sampling of the Association's activities/initiatives to this end.

1. **National Social Work Week:** Selection of theme/slogan (social justice/professional advocacy); annual poster; promotional items such as bookmarks or pens; inspirational leaders who serve as positive role models; and encouragement and provision of resources for Branches and agencies/organizations to heighten the profile of the profession and to celebrate the role and distinct contribution of social workers.

2. **Role Statements:** Social Work in Hospital Health Care; Social Work Services in Community-Based Health Care; Social Work in Mental Health; Role of Social Work in Primary Health Care – Family Health Teams.
3. **Social Advocacy:** Over the past year OASW has addressed a variety of issues including poverty and the government's Poverty Reduction Strategy, as well as human rights/child welfare issues such as recently asking members to support the "I Am a Witness Campaign" and Jordan's Principle on equal rights for First Nations children.
4. **Professional Advocacy:** Monitoring and responding to government legislation, regulations and/or policies that have the potential to impact on practice, e.g., recent consultations related to the extension of the title "Psychotherapist" to Registered Social Workers, and various communications/meetings with government concerning expansion in CCAC's role in discharge planning in hospitals.
5. **Communications:** Monthly E-Bulletins, OASW *Newsmagazine* and Branch newsletters.
6. **Advisory Groups:** Sector-based, e.g., Children and Youth Issues, Health Care, Mental Health.
7. **Virtual Networking Groups:** e.g., Private Practice, Family Health Teams, Home Care, Auto Insurance-Disability (MVA) sector, Mentoring Program.

Gillian McCloskey is Associate Executive Director of the Ontario Association of Social Workers.

SOCIAL WORK COMPETENCIES

by Adje van de Sande

Précis : *Depuis sa création vers la fin du 19e siècle, et encore aujourd'hui, le travail social continue d'évoluer. Présentement, trois démarches inter-reliées se déroulant au Canada auront un impact majeur sur la profession et sur l'identification des compétences de base la constituant. Il s'agit de l'Accord sur le commerce intérieur (ACI), des discussions des organismes provinciaux de réglementation et de la révision du processus d'accréditation de l'Association canadienne pour la formation en travail social.*

Cet article présente un survol des démarches en cours et de leur influence potentielle sur le travail social.

Since its creation during the later part of the nineteenth century, social work has continued to evolve. This is still the case today and there are three related events taking place in Canada right now which will have a dramatic impact on our profession and on the identification of basic social work competencies. These events are developments with respect to the Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT), the growing influence of the provincial Social Work Regulatory Organizations, and the current review of accreditation of Schools of Social Work by the Canadian Association for Social Work Education.

The Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT)

In 1994, the First Ministers in Canada signed the Agreement on Internal Trade which was intended to reduce the barriers to the movement of persons, goods, services, and investments in Canada. There are 15 chapters in the AIT and chapter 7 of the AIT addresses labour mobility. Its purpose is to enable any worker qualified for an occupation in a province (or territory) to have access to employment in another. Article 703 assigns the responsibility for labour mobility to legally delegated regulatory bodies. Article 707 requires that regulatory bodies identify basic competencies and publish or make accessible a description of basic competencies. Article 708 specifies how these competencies should be defined, beginning with a determination if a high level of commonality exists. First Ministers (except Quebec) agreed that chapter 7 should be enforced by a July 2001 deadline but few occupational groups, including Social Work, met that deadline.

The Provincial Social Work Regulatory Organization

While the provincial regulatory organizations were unable to meet the 2001 deadline, they are meeting on a regular basis in order to identify common social work competencies. During their discussions, it became clear that important differences exist between provinces. For instance, in Alberta, graduates with a college diploma in social work are eligible to become

certified Professional Social Workers while in other provinces, the entry level diploma is a Bachelor in Social Work. As a result of these differences, representatives of the provincial regulators have decided not to pursue discussions on competencies and are leaving it up to each province or territory to define their own. However, since this goes against the requirement of the AIT, there is ongoing pressure on provincial regulators to find some common ground. If they do reach some common ground, will they choose the lowest common denominator thus reducing the overall standards?

In the meantime, each provincial regulatory organization was or is in the process of developing a list of competencies. For example, the Quebec OPTSQ (L'Ordre professionnel des travailleurs sociaux du Québec) has a detailed list of competencies (Référentiel de compétences des travailleuses sociales et des travailleurs sociaux) while the OCSWSSW (Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers) does not have a list of competencies but relies instead on the Canadian Association for Social Work Education Standards of Accreditation. The OCSWSSW is, however, discussing adopting an entry to practice exam.

Review of Accreditation of Schools of Social Work by the Canadian Association for Social Work Education

The discussion on competencies taking place at the level of the provincial regulatory organizations has important implications for the accreditation of Schools of Social Work. Once the provincial regulators have adopted their respective lists of competencies, there will be increasing pressure on Schools of Social Work to ensure that these competencies are included in their curricula. Provincial regulators may ask to be involved in the accreditation of Schools of Social Work to ensure that these competencies are being covered. This is currently the case in Quebec. If Schools of Social Work lose some of their autonomy in terms of determining their curricula, will they move away from a commitment to social justice and social change and lean more to maintaining the status quo?

The Canadian Association for Social Work Education has begun a review of the process of

accreditation of Schools of Social Work. While it is still too early to tell which direction this review will take, the issue of competencies will no doubt be part of the discussion. Should CASWE move to an outcome-based accreditation process looking at competencies as the American CSWE (Council of Social Work Education) has done, or should they stick with the current focus on the content of the program? As social workers we need to follow these developments closely and, if we have concerns, to ensure that our voices are heard.

Dr. van de Sande is an Associate Professor at the School of Social Work at Carleton University. He teaches Research Methods and Statistics and Social Work Theory at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

**PROFESSIONALISM: ENLARGING
THE DEFINITION**
by Martha Wiebe

Precis: *L'Ontario s'est doté d'une loi protégeant le titre de travailleur social et déterminant qui peut s'en prévaloir. Les organismes de réglementation travaillent à identifier les compétences de base de la pratique. L'auteur propose que plutôt que de définir étroitement nos compétences, le travail social bénéficierait davantage si l'accent était mis sur la justice sociale comme principale caractéristique de la profession. Notre profession serait alors plus inclusive et serait davantage en mesure de soutenir des professionnels de différents horizons ou d'autres disciplines, partageant nos intérêts.*

As a profession we have spent considerable energy clarifying and justifying our role as professional practitioners. At times it has become a preoccupation of ours. We now have legislation in Ontario that outlines the right to the use of the title social worker. The accrediting body for social work education in Canada (CASWE) has articulated that only those with a social work degree qualify as supervisors for social work students. At the moment regulatory

bodies are pushing us to identify basic competencies.

I am proud to be a social worker but I am also concerned about the clear demarcation of professional boundaries. Rather than spelling out competencies and focusing on how we differ from others, I believe that our profession would be served better by emphasizing social justice as our primary defining characteristic. We share this territory with others and as such our professional boundaries need to be somewhat permeable.

Our profession's forbears, like Jane Addams and Bertha Reynolds, held social justice as the overriding principle. They strove to broaden and deepen social work practice, identifying the needs of the disadvantaged and responding in a holistic way. A struggle for equality and justice was fundamental to their vision of social work. They exemplified a radical practice that crossed interdisciplinary lines in order to get the work done.

This approach to social work is as important and relevant in the twenty-first century as it was when Jane Addams established the first settlement house in 1889. The current socially conservative environment is inhospitable to social workers attempting to promote a more equitable society. Advocacy work is viewed with suspicion in some social agencies and the government's 'tough on crime' mantra further discourages a social justice agenda. This makes it essential that social workers find ways of supporting and complementing the social justice work of others. Interdisciplinary connections can only help to strengthen our profession.

As the practicum coordinator at the School of Social Work at Carleton, I encounter many social workers who are deeply committed to social justice. However in my work I also encounter many professionals in the community who are doing "social work" but who come from different disciplines. These are people working with the disadvantaged in our communities; newcomers, the poor, the homeless, and those living with a disability or addiction.

Our definition of social work excludes many workers employed in settlement work, ethnic-

specific and ailment-specific agencies and in shelters. While these workers may not have the designated qualifications to call themselves social workers, they are doing the work of social work on a daily basis, and indeed have the necessary competencies.

Being prescriptive of what constitutes social work also frequently excludes those who are advocating for social justice at the broader level - people working in organizations such as *Make Poverty History* and *Canada Without Poverty*.

Progressive social work is practiced in all of these places, and indeed progressive social work frequently is done in concert with a network of people where our role might well be interchangeable with those of community activists, church people, policy makers, politicians, or innovative frontline workers. The overarching principle is that of social justice and a practice that respects diversity and equality. Learning from and working alongside people with expertise in particular areas of social services and policy can only benefit our profession and help fulfill our mission.

I believe there is a need to rethink our professional identity.

While interdisciplinary work may blur professional boundaries and create tensions, it is important that we deal with these challenges in a way that does not lose sight of our overall goal.

Social Work, like politics, is an art of the possible. We need to stay grounded in sound principles and remain clear about our mission: that of optimizing the dignity and potential of people, eradicating oppressive social conditions, and promoting equality and justice for all.

We also need to recognize that what we do must fit into a complicated network of persons and institutions. We can strengthen our social justice emphasis without losing a social work focus by supporting anti-oppressive initiatives in our communities, and participating with people who are at the forefront working on social justice issues.

Martha Wiebe is Practicum Coordinator of the Carleton University School of Social Work.

SYMPOSIUM INTERNATIONAL EN TRAVAIL SOCIAL DE GROUPE

par Alice Home

Vous vous intéressez à l'intervention de groupe ? Si oui, ne manquez pas cette occasion de présenter et de participer à ce **symposium international en travail social de groupe qui aura lieu à Montréal du 3 au 6 juin 2010**. Cet événement international se veut un lieu de rencontre où chercheurs et intervenants de tous les horizons s'intéressant au travail de groupe pourront échanger et apprendre les uns des autres. C'est une occasion de formation continue importante.

Même si ce symposium annuel existe depuis plus de 30 ans, c'est seulement la 5^{ième} fois qu'il a lieu au Canada. Les deux fois que le Québec a été l'hôte, il était possible de présenter en français et d'avoir accès à certaines conférences et ateliers importants en traduction simultanée. Lors du symposium à Toronto en 2000, plusieurs personnes de l'Est ontarien ont présenté leurs travaux en français. Il est essentiel que les francophones vivant en contexte minoritaire soient très présents à Montréal, afin de montrer au monde la créativité de nos pratiques et de nos recherches.

Chapeauté par l'Association for the Advancement of Social Work with Groups (ASSWG), le symposium de 2010 est organisé autour du thème, **Des recherches et des pratiques créatives en travail social de groupe : pour consolider la solidarité sociale**. Nous vous invite à postuler en grand nombre, en soumettant votre proposition au plus tard le **11 décembre 2009**. Pour accéder à l'appel de communications, nous vous invitons à consulter le site de l'ASSWG à www.aaswg.org. Si vous voulez une première rétroaction à votre proposition, vous pourrez d'abord l'envoyer à ahome@uottawa.ca. Je ferai de mon mieux pour vous aider, pourvu que je reçoive votre texte au moins 3 jours avant la date limite.

Vous pouvez diffuser cette invitation à toute personne de votre réseau ayant développé une pratique de groupe ou réalisé des recherches sur le sujet. Des renseignements supplémentaires au sujet du programme ainsi que des ateliers pré-symposium offrant une formation traitant de thèmes spécifiques seront bientôt disponibles sur le site de l'Association.

Pour toute information supplémentaire, vous pouvez communiquer avec les coordinatrices du Symposium :

Ginette Berteau (berteau.ginette@uqam.ca) et
Valérie Roy (valerie.roy@svs.ulaval.ca)

Nous espérons que vous nous enverrez beaucoup de propositions de communications!

*Alice Home, professeure titulaire,
École de service social, Université d'Ottawa*

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NOMINATIONS DUE:

Joan Gullen Annual Award
January 22, 2010
Bessie Touzel Award
March 5, 2010
Eastern Branch Board of Directors
April 1, 2010

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- Do you have an issue of concern to the Social Work Community you'd like to address, or a comment about an item or article that appeared in the *Bulletin*?
Your comments are always welcome.
You can reach us by e-mail at
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 We invite you to read issues of the *Bulletin* online at:

<http://oasw.org/en/communitysite/branches/eastern.asp>

Visit our Web page for the extended edition of the Fall 2009 Issue.

THE BULLETIN FOR SPRING 2009**"Providing Social Work Services in Difficult Times"**

Deadline for submissions:
February 17, 2010.

Send us your ideas and submissions for this issue!

MEILLEURS VŒUX DE LA SAISON!

Les membres du Conseil de la Section de l'est de l'ATTSO et le Comité de Publication du Bulletin vous souhaitent d'heureuses fêtes et une nouvelle année comblée de joie et de prospérité.

**SEASON'S GREETINGS!**

The Members of the Eastern Branch Board and the Bulletin Publication Committee wish you a very Happy Holiday Season and a peaceful, prosperous New Year.