LEAF MANITOBA

2008 – 2009

Annual Report

Accountability to you
An annual report offers an opportunity to pause in a hectic schedule to focus on the organization’s work during the past twelve months and the “fit” with the overall mission and desired direction. The report and the annual meeting present, also, an opportunity for accountability to members and other supporters – the “shareholders” of the corporation.

The LEAF Manitoba Board Directors welcomes the opportunity to report on and discuss our work during the 2008 – 2009 year

**Who is LEAF Manitoba?**

LEAF Manitoba is...

- Individual and organizational members
- Individual and corporate donors
- Individual and work group volunteers, including:
- A volunteer Board of Directors responsible for ensuring the work is done ethically, effectively, accountably (and we hope, with common sense, compassion and humor!)

- As you are aware we are a volunteer-based Branch. Our Board functions both as a governance board and as unpaid staff. It is essential that each Board Director assume a task in addition to the shared governance responsibilities. Ongoing work groups include Youth Outreach and “Breakfast.” Ad hoc work groups are formed as needed to address legal issues and special events. General outreach, education and networking are shared. Volunteers will be welcome in all areas but are needed in fundraising, membership development, Library and administrative tasks.

**What is LEAF Manitoba?**

LEAF Manitoba is the provincial Branch of a national voluntary sector non-profit organization, which advances the equality of women and girls in Canada, through strategic litigation, law reform, and education, based on the Canadian Charter of Rights & Freedoms.
1. Governance
   • Accountability
   • Succession
   • Moving Forward
   • Investing in Equality is W.I.S.E.
   • Further Good News

   • Reaching Out to Youth
   • Transforming Our Future
   • Community Connections for Equality

3. Education – Outreach – Fundraising
   • Celebrating Equality Day
   • Persons Day Breakfast

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Accountability

The LEAF Manitoba Board welcomes the responsibility and the opportunity to report to you, our supporters, on the 2008-2009 fiscal year activities. Only with your participation, support and feedback, can the legal concepts and interpretations of equality evolve with true relevance and significance for the every-day lives of women and girls. To a large extent, the success of LEAF Manitoba depends on you. In effect, you are the “shareholders” of this organization.

Please share this report with your colleagues and friends, and encourage their support and involvement.

As you know, governance is the responsibility of all Boards. Individuals who become LEAF Manitoba Directors accept, individually and corporately, serious legal and ethical responsibilities. These, of course, include:

- Participating in Board and work group meetings and deliberations
- Holding regular review and planning sessions
- Maintaining accurate records of and reports on Board activities
- Developing and following local and National policies including adhering to sound financial policies
- Establishing and facilitating policies for overseeing work groups, committees, and volunteer or paid personnel
- Decisions and directions must fit within LEAF’s Vision and Mission, and are reached by information gathering, analysis and consensus building.

Reflecting our commitment to financial accountability, our Treasurer, Cyndi Forcand, ensures our financial records are detailed and current. This year, we consulted with an Accountant with regard to the changing rules and regulations for the Canada Revenue Agency. This information is available for your perusal. “The Ethical Fundraising and Accountability Code” and a statement on “Donor Rights” form part of our financial accountability framework and also are available.

“The Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement” reflects the centrality of volunteers. We continue to work on improving our volunteer support and recording systems and will be seeking resources to advance this. If you would like to assist with this, please let us know.

Our Chair provides, to the Board, monthly reports, lists of correspondence and documents received, and, for self-review, annual summaries of Board meetings (content and attendance). Such reports form the context for development of annual reports to you. At the Annual General Meeting or at times convenient to you, your questions and comments are welcomed and encouraged. Our 07/08 annual meeting was held in June 08 at the National Film Board where members discussed the years work and viewed “Is Feminism A Bad Word.” A note from one of our members – “congratulations for making an A.G.M. not only bearable but interesting and fun – not an easy feat.”
Succession

✓ Succession Planning is another important Board responsibility. If the roles outlined in the preceding paragraph challenge you, and if you share a commitment to equality and can make the time to put this commitment into action, let us hear from you! We encourage you to read the cv’s of the current Directors; many bring extensive and diverse experience to their positions. Let us know if you are ready to join this team.

Moving Forward

Responsible Board governance includes:

✓ Ensuring the development and continuity of effective programming that advances LEAF’s Mission and Goals
✓ Ensuring the human and financial resources essential to this

Since it began in 1985, LEAF Manitoba has been operated entirely by volunteers. In addition to their governance role, each Director has been expected to become the volunteer leader of one program or area. LEAF Manitoba has been fortunate to have individuals make such commitments. One of these volunteers, for many years, has worked the equivalent of full time; others have invested well beyond the “usual” level of volunteer involvement. The home of one of these women has been the venue for LEAF work including LEAF meetings.

This core group has been planning for retirement. This has implications for ongoing program delivery and for the planned new programs, including our priority of addressing our provincial mandate. In today’s economic climate, it is unlikely that there will be individuals willing or able to make the time and skills commitment of the current core group. In fact, some Directors are finding it difficult to assume also the role of program leaders. For the work of LEAF Manitoba to continue and to develop, it is essential to allow long term Directors/volunteers to time their withdrawal responsibly and to enable new Directors/volunteers to become involved at a level that is sustainable and responsible. It has become evident that financial resources are essential to this. Consequently, increased attention has been given to increasing the financial resource capacity of LEAF Manitoba. We are convinced that investing in equality is wise.

Investing in Equality is W.I.S.E.

As outlined in previous reports, a major step toward financial security was the establishment of the W.I.S.E. endowment – Working in Support of Equality. Located at the highly regarded Winnipeg Foundation, we know that this fund will be managed and developed ethically, responsibly and in perpetuity. This step responded also to an earlier informal survey of donors and other supporters where 100% chose to have their dollars remain in and work in Manitoba. The W.I.S.E. endowment provides the opportunity for Manitobans to make long term commitment to the equality of women and girls and to ensure in Manitoba an ongoing, relevant presence dedicated to equality advancement and the non-erosion of advancements already achieved.

At the 2008 Breakfast, we introduced our two fundraising teams – Advisory and Action – women and men who will move forward on W.I.S.E. growth. We are fortunate to have them! If you wish to participate in this challenging, exciting and wise direction, with time, ideas or money, let us know. We encourage you to join others in ensuring that the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms will always have meaning in our everyday lives.
Once again, we thank those who have contributed to the endowment including those who are doing so regularly. In particular, we reiterate our appreciation to the “Respectful Work Place” group that donated the required financial “kick-start”.

Related to working for financial stability, a Volunteer Manitoba session on ethical Fundraising was attended by one of our Board members. Two Directors attended a Funders information session and two Directors attended the Winnipeg Foundation Agency Breakfast, an excellent reporting event. LEAF Manitoba was represented at a Manitoba Lotteries information session on fundraising. LEAF Manitoba also, is a selection choice in the All Charities catalogue.

Further Good News

Although over the years, LEAF Manitoba has sought and received small short term grants that have allowed volunteers to develop and hold workshops, consult with community and produce newsletters, we have chosen not to apply for larger grants where we would be in competition with important service organizations. This dilemma was solved when the Manitoba Law Foundation in 2008 launched a new funding program directed at legal related work. We responded quickly and developed a submission for consideration by the Law Foundation (available for your perusal).

We are delighted to report that the Law Foundation granted to LEAF Manitoba a $50,000 annual grant for a 3 year period. The Board chose to contract for program development and some administrative support. An important element of the program development contract is the creation of a 3 year implementation plan that will allow the LEAF Manitoba Board and the Law Foundation to monitor the effectiveness of this project and when needed, ensure appropriate adjustments. Stay tuned for the 2009-2010 annual report – or if you have questions or want to become involved in programs, contact us.

By now you will see that succession planning is proceeding. A priority for the current core group of women is to leave behind a growing, creative, productive and relevant equality advancing organization. Before the retiring Directors leave, it is our intent to advance:

- Development of the infrastructure necessary to ensure the ongoing capacity and relevance of the work of LEAF Manitoba (personnel, location, “systems” and supports, membership and volunteer development, fund development)
- Continuation, development, review and assessment of legal education programs (adult and youth)
- Development of our capacity for legal work including linkage with National programming
- Addressing our provincial mandate
- All within our value of community “ownership” and extensive volunteer involvement.

The involvement, monitoring and feedback from members and other supporters is essential to success.

Although much of time this year has been spent on succession planning including financial development, don’t worry – we haven’t forgotten programming! Read on.
As members are aware LEAF Manitoba supports the perspective that “Rights work when people are in a position to press for them; for others, they give only the caricature of justice.” Law must be accessible and relevant if legal advances are to have truly empowering impact – hence, LEAF Manitoba emphasis on education involving youth, adults, and community.

“Growing arrays of qualitative and quantitative research more specifically suggest that legal empowerment has helped advance poverty alleviation, good governance and other development goals”

Reaching Out to Youth

LEAF Manitoba welcomes the involvement of young people, their perspectives, their energy and their commitment to equality.

Over the past 12 years, an annual one day conference has been held at the historic and attractive University Women’s Club, bringing together young women students, LEAF volunteers and other community members to:

- Think about and discuss perspectives of and experiences with “equality” and “inequality”
- Learn about LEAF’s work and its relevance to the lives of all girls and women
- Discover the importance of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
- Define ways to advance their rights and the rights of others

These forums have been developed and delivered by volunteers committed to advancing the awareness and involvement of young women. These volunteers have continued because each session has been an enriching experience through which all have learned and benefited. The welcoming location has been a bonus!

The provocative title of the 2008 conference – “Equality and the ‘F’ Word: Feminism into the 21st Century” led to a day that began with a video. “Is Feminism a Bad Word?” Picking up on the theme, a panel of 4 women shared perspectives on feminism and equality – “Her Story – Our Story”. All of the presentations were excellent.

We draw attention to our good fortune in having as a speaker, Berenice Sisler, a long-time family law activist and LEAF supporter. Berenice captured the hearts and minds of all with her story and her sense of humour.

In the afternoon, a panel of young women met the challenge of the video, “Is Feminism a Bad Word?” as they shared their perspectives and experiences.

In morning and afternoon workshops titled “This is What a Feminist Looks Like”, attendees heard from and exchanged ideas with feminist community activists.
The successful day closed with music, cake and a toast to women who have influenced our lives. Deep appreciation is extended to all – the organizing work group, presenters, facilitators, students, and as always, to the University Women’s Club and their terrific staff. Deserving special acknowledgment is Audrey Young who since the first forum has provided leadership and support.

In the words of the young women ---

**One Thing I Learned Today....**

...what a feminist looks like....what feminism is  
...feminism affects all races  
...how women still get paid less than men for doing the same job  
...a man can be a feminist  
...awesome stuff - yah!  
...there are many definitions of feminism - it is broader than I thought  
...there are a lot of stereotypes about feminism that are not true  
...feminists are not men haters  
...I am a feminist....I am an ‘equalist’  
...it was all enjoyable - an amazing conference - thank you  
...beautiful amazing house  
...women’s rights & human rights  
...how can men be involved?

**One thing I Can Do When I Leave Here...**

...start up more dialogue in school  
...tell my boyfriend  
...educate my family and friends  
...become more active – become a feminist  
...be more aware of equality for everyone and how to achieve it

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Young feminists – reflecting – analyzing – communicating - mobilizing

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- Each year, the Persons Day Breakfast welcomes students from a variety of schools. Frequently, our speakers follow the Breakfast with an hour session with students. This did occur in 08 with Sally and Charlie.

- Some of you may recall that LEAF Manitoba “piloted” in Winnipeg School Division 1 the West Coast LEAF youth educational workshops “No Means No”. Although these were successful, the project involvement of grades 11 and 12 students as facilitators proved too labour intensive. We are now moving to recruit volunteers in the age range of 18 – 30 able to commit for a longer time period. We will be adding to this project the West Coast developed “Youth in the Workplace”. We encourage members to share our excitement as we move forward on these programs.
Another exciting prospect is a province wide youth conference for which we are seeking resources. If you are young (and/or young at heart), committed to equality, want to contribute and have fun, this is for you!

In recognition of International Women’s Day, the Board Chair was privileged to be invited to attend an event hosted by the Gender Equality Group at the St. James Collegiate. Thanks to the members of this group and teacher, Lauree Kopetsky for donating $100 to the LEAF Manitoba W.I.S.E. endowment – setting a precedent for other groups!

During the year, Board Director Allison Fenske coordinated youth outreach activities at the University of Manitoba and Red River College. Youth education is Allison’s priority work area within LEAF; we look forward to her continuing enthusiasm, leadership and standards of excellence as these developing projects become real! Allison has kept us up to date on the activities and documents connected with the Pan Canadian Young Feminist Gathering.

Volunteer Manitoba provided several sessions on engaging “Y Gen” volunteers. Although the focus was mainly on middle class youth, the information was helpful.

Transforming Our Future - Making the Law work for Women – Access to Justice

Have you heard the saying, if justice doesn’t work for everyone, it just doesn’t work? The fact is, for many reasons, justice does not work for everyone. Through our education programs, LEAF Manitoba works within our mandate to contribute to the justice and equality agendas. Such action is supported by the Beijing Platform for Action which states “Legal literacy programs and media strategies have been effective in helping women to understand the link between their rights and other aspects of their lives..... Provision of human rights education is essential for promoting an understanding of the human rights of women, including knowledge of recourse mechanisms to redress violations of their rights. It is necessary for all individuals, especially women in vulnerable circumstances, to have full knowledge of their rights and access to legal recourse against violating of their rights”. This statement reflects the purpose of our Transforming Our Future program.

In last year’s annual report, we advised you of the Manitoba launch of this West Coast LEAF developed program. During the past year, we have come to realize that the legal volunteers do not have the time required to move this program forward. Consequently, this program has been identified as a priority for the program development contract. We urge you to contact us and book the 2 day workshop for your colleagues, your friends or your organization. Together with two of the nine lawyers volunteering with this program, learn about hands on strategies for making the law work for you: - the promise of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, human rights and international law - successful and unsuccessful test case litigation - 5 legal strategies for addressing discrimination - how to build legal strategies and skills

If you want to participate in a workshop for LEAF members, please contact Board Directors Anne Turner or Betty Hopkins.

Speakers Bureau – Currently, this previously active program has become reactive rather than proactive. With increased support, it is our intent to increase the number of speakers and strengthen the outreach process.
Community Connections for Equality

Every day in this province, individuals and organizations strive to advance the rights of all women and girls—to dignity, respect, educational opportunities, jobs with fair and secure income, freedom from violence, safe housing, relevant and effective health care, accessible child care, meaningful participation—all essential to the self reliance and healthy interdependence demanded of Canadian citizens and all connected in some way with national and international law. LEAF Manitoba is proud to be part of this activist community.

For LEAF Manitoba, these linkages are limited only by the time and people resources required to build and maintain them. We know that together we are stronger.

For the information of members, some of these connections include the following:

- A fitting start to the 08/09 year of equality work was the City Equity Committee Dinner in April. Congratulations to Laurie Helgason for this celebratory and educational event. Laurie doesn’t allow health challenges to limit her work for equality. We are privileged to share this journey with her.

- Laurie is also the Chair of DAWN, the Disabled Women’s Network Manitoba. Under her leadership, this organization is growing in size and impact. We look forward to ongoing contact and shared work. A session of Transforming Our Future is in the planning stage.

- AESES, a regular Breakfast supporter and active in the area of education, in April, invited LEAF Manitoba to a presentation by Robert Fuller—“Democracy’s Next Steps: Building a Dignitarian Society” related to his book “All Rise; Sombodies, Nobodies, and the Politics of Dignity”—topics with obvious relevance for equality work.

- In May, LEAF Manitoba was represented at an Elizabeth Fry Society of Manitoba educational event. The primary speaker was Beverley Jacobs, President Native Women’s Association of Canada. Ms. Jacobs was the lead researcher and consultant for Amnesty International’s Stolen Sisters Report. She said that her work for justice for missing and murdered Aboriginal women and her mission to end this victimization was inspired by her work with Amnesty. Her presentation was followed by comments from Kim Pate—Executive Director, Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies, Inspector Bill Fogg—Winnipeg Police Services, and Gloria Enns—Program Manager, Sage House. Recordings of the session were to be made available. Many challenges must be overcome if women caught up in this system are to experience justice and achieve equality.

- Also in May, Directors Brenlee Carrington-Trepel and Paula Leslie nominated Betty Hopkins for an Anita Neville Community Volunteer Leadership Award. Several Board Members attended the award event—a pleasant non political community occasion. Thanks to all!

- In June, the Immigrant Women’s Association of Manitoba held their annual meeting (report available) LEAF Manitoba Board Director Beatrice Watson is the IWAM Board Chair and Lucia Jofre also is a member of both Boards. IWAM now has a resource centre at 399 Graham where educational and social events are held. Circulated at the meeting (and available) was a copy of the Multicultural Expo Report; another such event was underway for 2009.

Also of interest is the Youth Mentoring Project—an obvious connection for LEAF Manitoba youth programs. The Thompson Branch is again active and is a potential contact as we move to address our provincial mandate.
Basic rights that non-immigrant women may take for granted but pose day to day struggle for immigrant women

- Lack of knowledge about human rights specifically women’s rights in Canada
- No access to education due to cultural beliefs or practices
- Lack of support from husbands
- Lack of support to deal with cultural shock
- Lack of childcare during evenings and on weekends so can attend school while working full time jobs (classes in English & employment related classes)
- Lack of cultural awareness at place of work
- Lack of information essential to live in new home land
- Lack of information in first languages

• In June, Paula Leslie represented LEAF Manitoba at the annual “Keeping the Fires Burning” dinner honouring Aboriginal women leaders. This awards ceremony and banquet is a Ka Ni Kanichihk event, raising money for women’s programs.

• “Celebrating Women” has become an annual event for the Provincial Council of Women. Several LEAF Directors joined in recognizing individual and federate council members for their service to the community – Elaine Adam, Peggy Barker, Murdine Brownlee, Donna May Yeo and the Women’s Health Clinic and the Manitoba Executive of the Ukrainian Women’s Association of Canada. Most of these women have been long time LEAF supporters.

• Congratulations to People First on the premiere of “The Freedom Tour” which reveals the dehumanizing impact of institutionalization and exclusion of persons with intellectual disabilities and speaks for inclusion and community living for all persons.

• Congratulations also to the Women’s Health Clinic on the “Birthing Project” a collaborative artwork created by glass artist Judy Jennings. Besides providing a vision of normal pregnancy and birth from many cultural perspectives, the pieces will be used as focal points while women are in labour. While awaiting completion of the new birth centre, this work of art will be hung in the street level windows at Women’s Health Clinic on Graham. It is beautiful; we were pleased to be part of the celebration.

The WHC is doing other important work as they consult on the Women’s Health Strategy now under revision. They offer a great opportunity for you to tell them what you believe are women health care needs. We urge you to participate.

• While we are referring to women’s health, do you know that the Prairie Women’s Health Centre of Excellence released a new publication “A Profile of Women’s Health in Manitoba.” – an excellent and comprehensive resource.

Women’s Health Matters!
Do you know about the Women’s Health Strategy renewal?
What do women need for health? Ideas? Concerns?
www.womenshealthclinic.org
• Many reps of women’s organizations attended the open house of the Manitoba Women’s Advisory Council/Status of Women at their new office 409 – 401 York Ave.

The Advisory Council has held 2 round tables for information sharing this year. You may recall these were started, at our urging, to bring together groups concerned about young women and violence. This is no longer the focus; they are now information sharing sessions, also valuable (minutes available to members).

• Several Directors responded to the invitation to meet with the Federal Liberal Women’s Caucus. Issues of particular concern to women were raised and discussed. Concern was expressed about the change in mandate of the federal Status of Women funding program and the negative impact on the work of several organizations, particularly those with research, advocacy and/or equality in their mandate.

• Poverty/Economic Security is core to equality. UNPAC – the United Nations Platform for Action Committee, after a short break, is more active than ever. Via their Women’s Mentorship Project, they are providing workshops related to empowerment, change and economic rights – following up on their previous Gender Budget project.

At their annual meeting this year, they urged people to speak out on the need for UN Security Council action on Burma with the message “Please use your liberty to promote ours” from Nobel Peace Prize recipient and political prisoner Aung San Suu Kyi.

• Community Legal Education Association held an open house in October, welcoming people to their new premises.

• Women’s History Month was marked by a celebration hosted by the Honourable Nancy Allan with the theme “Taking the Lead: Women Who Have Made a Difference in Manitoba”. An attractive booklet recognized Karen Busby, Diana DeLaronde-Columbe, Dr. June James, Myrna Phillips and Edith Regier, women well known to most of us. Congratulations!

• Also in October, The Manitoba Association of Shelters organized a travelling exhibition of over 400 international posters related to gender violence (collected by an Irish policeman). This strong statement was supported also by CUPE and the Family Violence Prevention Program.

• Resolve Research Days focused on sharing information on new research and new programs in the field of interpersonal violence. There seems to be some excellent work being done; getting the information into the hands of front line workers and law and policy decision makers is a challenge.

• Unfortunately, no volunteers were available to attend the Two Faces of Poverty conference in November. If any LEAF members did attend and have information and opinions to share, please let us know.

• Once again, the Congress of Black Women welcomed community members to their Kwanzaa day to share the seven principles and to remember and honour past and current Black heroes and personal heroes.

• Together, many individuals remembered the fourteen young women killed on December 6th, 1989 at the Polytechnique, and recommitted to ending violence.

• The Canadian Museum for Human Rights held several sessions to announce their excellent progress and to recognize their supporters. Gail Asper and her team have done a marvelous job.
• Community Living Manitoba held a focus group on Legal Capacity of Adults with Intellectual Disabilities and Supported Decision Making. LEAF volunteers were invited to participate.

• On January 31st as Black History month was about to begin, we were happy to share in the Congress of Black Women Manitoba Chapter Pioneers’ celebration – “The Courage to Make a Difference” dinner. A festive evening recognized Abraham Shadd and Rosemary Brown. “Mr. Abraham Shadd born in 1801 in the United States was an integral and early participant of the Underground Railway…..Our second pioneer, or heroine, was elected to public office in 1973; she too fought for social justice and for human rights in general.” The souvenir program from which this is a quote is available for your perusal. Descendants of these pioneers attended. The commemorative stamp was unveiled.

“It was when I came to Canada I heard people say for the first time ‘you are inferior because you are black.’ But it was too late. Where I came from anyone who was anyone was black – the governor was black, the judges were black. And I knew I wasn’t inferior to anyone.”

From her biography “Being Brown”

• Congratulations to the Manitoba Human Rights Commission on their conference celebrating the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

• Grassroots Women acknowledged activists Deb Jamerson, Marcelline Ndayumviere, Dr. Susan Prentise, Susan Rodriguez and Frances Russell.

• LEAF members attended a Faculty of Law reception following a Faculty workshop with Women’s Court members, Melina Buckley, Shelagh Day and Mary Eberts (all now or at one time active with LEAF).

LEAF Manitoba Board and workgroup/committee members are involved with many other organizations; participate in conference planning and in workshops, ensuring that LEAF Manitoba continues to hear about women’s lived experiences of equality and inequality. These liaisons are essential to our work.

Women in Manitoba still earn on average 65% of what men earn. In 2006 women’s yearly earnings were $27,700 compared with $42,900 for men. Aboriginal women, immigrant women and women living with disabilities earned even less. At least 40% of Canadian women don’t pay any taxes either because their work is unpaid or their income from paid work is too low. Many other women have incomes that fall into the lowest tax bracket. That means most women have benefited little – if at all – from tax cuts. UNPAC consulted nearly 500 Manitoba women between 2005 and 2007 on their priorities. In 17 communities we heard that affordable child care and affordable rental housing were women’s top priorities.

UNPAC March Update
Celebrating Equality Day

On April 16th, LEAF Manitoba volunteers, members, Breakfast Patrons and Hosts, and other supporters gathered together to recognize the 23rd anniversary of the Charter equality guarantees and of LEAF. Once again, the attractive Blackstone Lounge provided a celebratory and relaxing environment for the occasion. For this, we thank Pat Lane and Taylor McCaffrey.

Sarah Lugtig of the M.H.C. captivated all with her presentation on Equality in Sport, focusing on the recent decision in Manitoba High Schools Athletic Association vs. Pasternak. Sarah spoke of history, of the barriers that continue to face women and girls in sports, of importance and challenge of media understanding and interpretation, and of the courage of all women who undertake actions such as these. Everyone joined in a toast to Amy and Jesse Pasternak for their courage and to each and every woman who has stood up for equality before human rights tribunals and the courts.

Sandi Phillips shared stories of LEAF’s current equality work. Susan Joanis outlined the goals of the current LEAF National Court Project. Pat Lane expressed appreciation to all for their attendance and support.

The enjoyable event concluded with a presentation by Sharon Blady MLA for Kirkfield Park – a framed copy of her Private Member’s Statement on the LEAF Persons Day Breakfast 2007.

Another enjoyable aspect of this event is the availability of time for visiting and “catching up.”

Persons Day Breakfast 2008 – Media – Men – Money!

The title of our 18th annual breakfast together identified three variables that impact significantly on the advancement of equality for women and girls – media – men – money. To address these topics, LEAF Manitoba was happy to welcome two of our long-time friends, Sally Armstrong M.C. award winning author, human rights activist and documentary filmmaker, and Charles S. Coffey O.C. former executive V.P., governmental affairs and business development for the R.B.C. Financial Group and community leader in areas that advance equality for Aboriginal peoples, children and women.

Following expression of her pleasure at returning to Winnipeg, Sally addressed the topic – the role and influence of the media. She stated that, as a journalist, her job is to research and present facts, tell the stories; it is not to advance anyone’s agenda. Advancing an agenda for change depends not only on activists using these stories to support their work but also on activists providing her with the research and information essential to her telling these stories. Although she can write of the horrors of war, the oppression of and violence against women, she cannot alter that status. Only people coming together and pushing for change can have the needed impact.

Sally acknowledged the activism of women in the room, stating she was certain there were more “equality seekers” per capita in Winnipeg than anywhere else in the world. She spoke of the courage of Canadian activists in the 1960’s and 1970’s as they learned the necessity of coming together to effect change. In her view, women around the world are now following what she calls “the LEAF blueprint.” She spoke of the atrocities against women in Bosnia, Afghanistan, and the Congo, and how, at risk of being killed, courageous women are making change. The women of Bosnia, victims of rape camps succeeded in having the International
Criminal Court declare rape a war crime. She acknowledged that getting the information on the horrendous rape camps into the news was a challenge. She urged those present to continue to get up at 6:00am to come to these Breakfasts and to continue to work for change. She emphasized that evil thrives on apathy; in the absence of protest, evil flourishes. “Innocent bystander” is an oxymoron. If we do not intervene when we see injustice, we are giving tacit approval to injustice. Moral courage is a rare commodity but moral courage is essential if the much needed change is to be achieved.

Sally acknowledged the second speaker for using his position at the Royal Bank to provide women activists with access to men in position of power and influence.

Our second speaker, Charles S. Coffey, recognized that he was LEAF Manitoba’s first male Breakfast speaker; he expressed the hope that this was not an exception but a trend – a call to action for men to become more involved in working for women’s equality and in LEAF. He emphasized the importance of partnerships if true gender equality is to be achieved.

Charlie acknowledged the Royal Bank for supporting his work on behalf of women’s equality. He stated that the Bank is a leader in diversity, cited several examples of their world wide involvements, and observed that he and the Bank know that women’s equality is good for business.

He spoke of his support for Equal Voice, the need for more women in government and in other areas of decision making. He acknowledged the efforts and achievements of each political party in this regard and recognized the special challenges facing women in politics, in particular biased attitudes.

In acknowledging the Persons case, Charlie spoke of the contributions of many women in the room. He cited the importance of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights and referred to Winnipeg’s becoming the human rights capital of the world.

Charlie then referenced and recommended several activities that could assist in increased gender understanding. He challenged men to change mind-set and behavior - to become advocates for equality - to change their perceptions of the world. He said this is not a matter of choice – it is essential in Canada and around the world. He recognized the need for money to support LEAF’s work and encouraged the media to report more on LEAF activities including the importance of the Persons Day Breakfasts.

He also recognized the need for improved pay equity, a poverty reduction strategy and the need for child care. In this latter regard he cited early child development as a priority area for his involvement. He linked this also with an opportunity for early education about gender differences and similarities and the importance of working for equality.

In addressing the “money” aspect of the morning’s title, Betty updated people on the W.I.S.E endowment at the Winnipeg Foundation, thanked those who had contributed, and encouraged others to do so. She welcomed and introduced the members of the fund development Action and Advisory groups – community volunteers who will be developing strategies to “grow” the endowment to a level that will ensure, in Manitoba, an ongoing voice for equality.
Since LEAF formed, the legal work has been managed at the National level – formerly by the Litigation Director and a volunteer legal committee – now by the Program Development Committee and the National Board. A National Legal Committee reviews, develops and recommends law reform and litigation actions. Branches continue to have the opportunity to propose potential cases and/or law reform topics. To maximize the potential in Manitoba, additional resources are required. Planning for and obtaining these resources is an important priority for LEAF Manitoba during the 2009-2010 year.

Currently, at the Branch level, emphasis is placed on legal education, information sharing, consultation and collaboration. As reported, the Transforming Our Future legal education program involves several lawyers new to LEAF Manitoba and others with a history of involvement and commitment. It is anticipated that additional necessary legal work will be identified through this program. We look forward to developing liaisons with the new Legal Director at the National office.

**Pro Bono Student Project**
Last year, we advised you of this LEAF Manitoba sponsored project implemented by Meredith Mitchell and overseen by Evelyn Braun and Renate Krause. This very focused project was completed in May 2008. What did we learn? We learned about the importance of clarity and process and about “Intervention Rules” in various provinces. These results were shared with the following project -

**National Court Monitoring Project**
The goals of this national project were outlined in our 2007/2008 annual report. Loretta Ross, LEAF Manitoba Board Director is our rep on the Advisory Committee. Although the project is directed out of the National Office, the project director, Susan Joanis lives in Winnipeg and is well known to many of you. We look forward to reports on this project.

**Bill C484**
In the 2008/09 year, community action against Bill C484 continued – a bill that threatens women’s reproductive rights and does nothing to address the serious issue of violence against women. Rather than this proposed legislation, we desperately need the commitment of resources for effective measures to enforce existing legislation to protect all women from violence. Protecting a pregnant woman from violence will also protect the fetus. We need to provide pregnant women with the necessary resources and support to ensure a safe and healthy pregnancy, including protection from male violence. Although this Bill is dead, it can be re-introduced; women’s groups continue to be vigilant. Thank you to Madeline Bosco for making relevant information available at this year’s Persons Day Breakfast.

**United Nations Periodic Review (UPR) of Canada**
“The UPR was created through the UN General Assembly by the same resolution which established the new Human Rights Council, intended to demonstrate a commitment to the principle of universal accountability to international human rights. The aim of the procedure is to improve the human rights situation in all countries and address human rights violations when they occur. This is the first time Canada has been reviewed under the UPR.” In response to an invitation in January, LEAF Manitoba participated in a “civil society” consultation organized by individuals several of whom attended the February Geneva meeting to press for an honest assessment of Canada’s human rights limitations. At the local meeting, many issues were raised; also the Canadian government report to the Council was shared and received considerable criticism. Reports on the UN panel review of Canada are
now available. An emphasis was placed on Canada’s need to address the human rights of First Nations peoples. Canada was urged also to reconsider its stance against signing the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Canada was one of four countries that voted against the Declaration in September 2007. Canada has until June to respond to the Council report.

We urge you to review the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and share your views with us. If you require a copy of the document, just call us.

The Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action
For a comprehensive review and analysis of women’s equality/inequality in Canada, we urge you to read FAFIA’s submission to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women September 2008. This document provided excellent information and context for our participation in the January consultation on the UPR. If you would like a copy of the recommendations please let us know.

The Childcare Coalition of Manitoba continues to advance understanding of and commitment to universal childcare. LEAF Manitoba supported a letter to the Minister of Family Services and Housing urging the government to make certain that legislation and policies protect the not for profit childcare system. If this is a priority equality issue for you, the Coalition has produced many relevant studies, including in 2008 “Rural and Northern Childcare – A Summary of Economic and Social Evidence from Manitoba.”

The Canadian Labour Congress also has produced excellent materials as part of their campaign for Women’s Economic Equality. Pay Equity continues to be a priority for union activists. Maureen Morrison spoke on related issues at our Youth Conference in 08. As you know, the federal government, this year, introduced new pay equity related legislation. Unfortunately, although we desired to do so, we did not have the resources to develop a position on this legislation. In response to a request from Anita Neville’s office, we were able to refer union contacts and contacts at the LEAF National office as possible presenters at committee hearings. We look forward to receiving copies of the presentations.
Did you know that Canada is the only G8 country without a mental health strategy? The Mental Health Commission of Canada has been given the responsibility to work with Canadians to address this gap. The Commission is seeking your input. Locally, the Provincial Council of Women is supporting production of a DVD on mental health issues – including the unique perspective and experience of women.

Trafficking and sexual exploitation of women and girls, is a disease of patriarchal society, the quintessential violation of women’s autonomy and human rights, and the ultimate reflection of women’s status as the property of men, as commodities, and as creatures who exist primarily to service men’s sexual desire – (Dr. L.R. Wolfe, President, The Centre for Women’s Policy Studies)

“Gender equality will remain unattainable as long as men buy, sell, and exploit women and children by prostituting them.” (Swedish government fact sheet)

“In Canada, enforcement of the child sex tourism law has been especially lacking. From 1993 to 2008 at least 156 Canadian sex tourists were arrested abroad, but many evaded detection or prosecution in known child sex tourism destination countries. To date, only a single Canadian has been convicted of child sex trafficking, with a handful of additional cases currently before Canadian courts. Sexual crimes against children in other countries are not registered on the Canadian Sex Offender Registry.” (Report of the Canada – US Consultation In Preparation for World Congress III Against Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents – October 2008)

LEAF Manitoba regards linkage with individuals and groups working to stop trafficking as an important part of equality work. If this is a concern of yours, please contact us.

Gender Responsive Budgeting – this year, another important document related to equality advancement was the unanimous report “Gender Responsive Budgeting: Equality Report Special Edition of the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women.” One of the many recommendations was the creation of a Commissioner for gender equality and legislation to promote gender equality. If on reviewing the federal budget, you have views on the need for gender responsive budgeting, you might want to discuss this report with your member of parliament.

“The need for a gender – sensitive approach to the mental health of young Canadians” – a study that examines how the intersections of gender, poverty, racialization, Aboriginal status, and other factors can effect mental health and well – being for girls and young women www.powercampnational.ca - from Brigit’s Notes
In a country as large and as diverse as Canada, establishing an across Canada presence, influence, and movement presents challenge and opportunity. Commitment to the vision of substantive equality for all women and girls requires that we maximize the opportunity and meet the challenge in a way that values diversity and works to make equality theory a lived reality, not only in our community and our country but also within our own organization.

This framework assists in LEAF’s current restructuring and governance work as the organization strives to move ahead in today’s rapidly changing environment(s). As part of the change process, LEAF Manitoba will be working with the National Board and Office to develop a new Agreement on how, together, we can most effectively advance equality for women and girls. As part of the Manitoba Branch, your participation in defining the content of the Memorandum of understanding is important. This is your organization. Please contact us with regard to participating in discussions.

Development and change at the National level has included several staff changes. Susan Joanis, formerly of the Court Challenges Program, assumed the role of coordinator of the Court Monitoring Project. Kathleen Blake joined the National Office as the new Director of Fund Development and Niki Popper as the Education Program Coordinator. In November, Joanne Birenbaum was hired as Director of Litigation. Susan, of course, is known to many of you. She lives in Winnipeg, is a LEAF Manitoba member, and at the Equality Day event, provided information on the Court Monitoring Project. We look forward to meeting the other staff members.

The National Board 2008/2009 Annual Report will elaborate on National programs and activities and will be available to LEAF Manitoba members. Two recent press releases are included in the appendices of this LEAF Manitoba Report.

Ms. Arbour told her audience that, upon entering the world of international human rights, the thing that shocked her most was discrimination against women. Coming from Canada, she said, she had grown used to the idea that the law can be used to advance gender equality.

“But when I arrived on the international scene, gender equality was on the back of the bus,” she said. “I’m not a conspiracy theorist, but if I was, there is no other form of discrimination that is as universal and universally enforced as gender discrimination. None. And the resistance is absolutely stunning.

“We are just talking discriminatory laws - not attacking the much more invidious cultural or religious practices that have to be tackled,” she added. “The resistance of member states was very surprising.”
Volunteers, including the Board of Directors, are the strength of LEAF Manitoba. In our busy lives, it is important that we make time to value and acknowledge each other. In 2010, the 25th anniversary year, we plan to hold an appreciation and reunion event. If you would like to be involved, please let us know.

The deaths of long time supporters of equality leave us with feelings of both sadness and appreciation. This year, we acknowledge the loss, the friendship, and the contributions of Babs(Eira) Friesen and Pamela Mason. And we express our sympathy to long time equality activist Karen Busby on the death of her mother, Norma Lorraine Busby. These women are part of the equality story and should be remembered and celebrated.

This year, Board Director, Beatrice Watson, was honoured by the Dinamba Intercultural Association of Manitoba. Several of us attended the celebration. Congratulations Beatrice!

Congratulations, also, to Dianna Scarth, Executive Director of the Manitoba Human Rights Commission. Dianna received the Manitoba Service Excellence Award for Leadership; she was nominated by staff members Susan Joanis and Sarah Lugtig, also leaders in equality work.

We recognize also, Shelagh Day, the first President of LEAF, recipient of a 2008 Governor General’s Award in Commemoration of the Persons Case – well deserved!

2008 was important for new Board Director, Allison Fenske as she received her Call to the Bar and joined Thompson, Dorfman Sweatman LLP (one of our Breakfast Hosts!).

Congratulations Allison!

Last year we advised you to stay tuned for news of more awards for Muriel Smith, former LEAF Manitoba Board Member. “Trailblazer,” Muriel in 2008 was inducted as an officer of the Order of Canada. Well done, Muriel!

As the fiscal year closed, we were delighted to share in the celebration of Black History Month and the launching of a commemorative stamp featuring Canadian feminist activist, Rosemary Brown.

In the community connections section of this report, we have noted also several celebrations recognizing women. We know each of you have your own heroes and role models. We urge you to take time not only to recognize and appreciate them but also to recognize the value of your own involvements and contributions. Thank you!

“We want women leaders today as never before. Leaders who are not afraid to be called names and who are willing to go out and fight. I think women can save civilization. Women are persons.

- Emily Murphy of the Famous Five
2008/09 has been a year of challenges as we moved forward on our plans for organizational continuity, - people, program and resource development, - and our place within a changing national organization. In our review and planning, a statement adopted in the 90’s seems as relevant now as it did then. I have included “Ingredients of a Successful Organization” and “Key Factors for Success” and would appreciate hearing whether it resonates with you as part of LEAF Manitoba.

There are many people to whom the Board of Directors expresses thanks – committed, active volunteers, the Winnipeg Foundation, the Manitoba Law Foundation, Breakfast Patrons and Hosts, W.I.S.E. endowment and other donors, event attendees, and you – LEAF Manitoba members. Only with the synergy of many, including other organizations, will our shared vision of equality become a reality. We are inspired and humbled by the courage of women in all parts of the world – women and girls who face danger as they insist on their rights and on true equality in all aspects of their lives. Much work remains. Fair and just laws form only a part of what is needed but they are a vital component. They reflect the values of a country – the values of us as citizens.

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms exemplifies the commitment of Canadians to progressive change in law – in this case, to our most important law – the Constitution. But rights and freedoms are only words on paper if they are not reflected in our everyday lives. That is why LEAF’s legal and educational work continues to be relevant and important. Barriers to justice, equality and freedom can be erected one closed door at a time – and gains made can be lost if we are not vigilant. That is why your support is so important and so appreciated.

There are others to thank. I reiterate our appreciation for the ongoing support of West Coast LEAF. Over the years, they have been a valued resource and friend. We hold them in high regard for all they do, all they are and all they share. If Manitoba members visit Vancouver, why not give them a quick call of thanks!

This year we say thank you and goodbye to Board Director Paula Leslie. We miss her and are pleased that she continues as a program volunteer. At the 2007/08 annual meeting, Allison Fenske and Loretta Ross were welcomed to the Board and have accepted roles in educational programming.

As we approach the 25th anniversary of “the Charter” and of LEAF in 2010, we encourage you to come forward with ideas to advance our shared vision and to celebrate. As we move closer also to 2015, we share a responsibility to monitor and insist on the advancement of the Millennium Development Goals. We should be half way “there” – In Canada, the Parliamentary Committee studying the federal role in poverty – reduction offers an opportunity to express support for economic rights and poverty eradication – one of the Millennium goals. Did I say – much work remains!

As outlined in the Report, several of us will be leaving the Board at the end of the 2010 anniversary year – or before, if the required resources are in place. Whatever you can do to assist in the development of these resources will be welcomed. The work of LEAF Manitoba is important to us as it is to you. Essentially it is about belief in the worth and dignity of each and every individual and the right of each and every individual to be all she or he can be. That belief and the work to advance it really is a life-long journey that we all share and that we will continue to share wherever we may be involved. We appreciate sharing it with you.
Thank you. On behalf of the LEAF Manitoba Board of Directors

Betty Hopkins
Chair/Coordinator

Creating a Just World
What are Millennium Development Goals? There are 8 goals, with 18 targets, agreed to by 192 members of the U.N. in 2000. The UN pledged to meet these goals by 2015 in.............Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality, reducing child mortality, combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, improving maternal health, ensuring environmental sustainability and developing a global partnership for development.

INGREDIENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL ORGANIZATION

• Clarity of purpose, goals, direction, organizational cohesiveness, integration of efforts
• Organization structure compatible with purpose and priorities
• Clarity about division of responsibility/authority
• Controls adequate to ensure avoidance of failure and measurement of progress but not so tight as to restrict success
• Concern for integrating personal and organizational goals
• Open, authentic, supportive relationships, optimism and trust in people and between people
• Skills and competencies appropriate for the job to be done, freedom to enjoy using talents to the full
• Ability to cope with or determine or influence own destiny
• Acceptance of conflict as an opportunity for better decisions and personal growth*

K.F.S. - KEY FACTORS FOR SUCCESS

• A cause which a substantial number of people think is important
• The capacity to organize, train and manage a force of volunteers
• A connection to key opinion leaders prepared to lead the way
• A mechanism for providing feedback to the community to show results
• Dedication, persistence and a passion for quality
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dr. Ertrice Eddy received her undergraduate training in physical therapy in England and subsequently did post-graduate studies at the University of Manitoba, Faculty of Medicine, receiving a PhD in Neuroanatomy. She has also done other courses in Management and Administration.

Her work experience includes a number of years as a professor at the University of Manitoba; teaching courses to women in a management program; conducting workshops on, and being an Investigator of, issues involving employment equity and cultural diversity; working as a Professional and Consultant in various aspects of the health care system; and as an acting Executive Director of the Citizenship Council of Manitoba. She has worked with a wide variety of community groups in the above areas, and has been an invited speaker nationally and internationally, the most recent engagement being in Dubai (2006). She has operated her own consulting business and private professional practice for the past 11 years.

Ertrice has also been active in the community, serving as director on many boards, including the Victorian Order of Nurses; the Citizenship Council of Manitoba the Association of Professional Engineers & the National Multicultural Health Council.

She has been the recipient of the YWCA Women of Distinction award, in addition to other community and professional recognition. Ertrice has been a member of LEAF Manitoba since 1993 and acted as co-chair of the Legal committee. She was the national representative for Manitoba on the National Board of Directors of LEAF, completing her 4- ½ year term in October 99. At the national level, she chaired the Structure Task Force that looked at movement of the organization to a policy governance mode of operation. In 2005, she was re-elected to the national Board and also continue to be involved at the local level.

Allison Fenske grew up in Northern Manitoba in a family that championed community involvement. It was within that environment that she developed a passion for equality issues - both women’s issues and First Nations issues. Allison has a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and Native Studies from the University of Saskatchewan and an L.L.B. from the University of Manitoba. She is an associate at Thompson Dorfman Sweatman LLP, practicing primarily in the areas of Aboriginal law (Natural Resource development and the Duty to Consult) and Labour/Employment law.

Allison’s past involvements have included the YWCA doing workshops on body image, Pro Bono Students Canada, and the Manitoba Association of Women and the Law - as part of the group that authored and published MAWL’s Charter audit.

Allison became involved with LEAF via the annual youth conference. To quote Allison “It has been a tremendous experience and now, having one conference under my belt I am eager to become more involved in an organization that is one of Canada’s leading champions of women’s equality issues. I love working with LEAF because of the breadth of issues dealt with and the way I am able to combine my passions for the law, feminism and equality!”

As a member of the Board of LEAF, Allison’s main interest is in the development of youth programming including the “No Means No” program and planning for 2010 youth conference to celebrate 25 years of the (effect of) the Charter, bringing together high school students from around the province to learn about, discuss, and enjoy equality issues.

Cyndi Forcand is the Program Administrator for the Production Studio of the National Film Board in Winnipeg. Her responsibilities include management of finances and administration.

Cyndi served as a Director and Board Chair of Winnipeg Contemporary Dancers, and is involved with the Professional Institute of the Public Service Council of Canada. Since 1995 Cyndi has been very active on the LEAF Breakfast committee, chaired the committee in 1999, 2000 and 2001. She is currently LEAF’s Treasurer.
Sharron Gould is the Manager of Human Resources for the Winnipeg Police Service. Sharron has been a Human Resources professional for over 20 years with senior experience

- In Labour Relations, Arbitration and Contract Negotiation
- Ten years experience in developing, implementing and monitoring equity and human rights policies/practices
- Design and administration of compensation systems, developing job evaluations and performance evaluations
- Negotiator, Investigator and Mediator
- Training and instruction in the public and private sector
- Twenty-five years experience in Board Development and Governance issues.

Sharron has been on the following boards/committees:

- Board Member - Legal Education Action Fund (L.E.A.F.) Manitoba
- Founding Member – Alternative Dispute Resolution Education Council
- President – Canadian Mental Health Association (National)
- President – Planned Parenthood of Manitoba
- Vice-President – Family Mediation of Manitoba
- President – Canadian Mental Health Association (Manitoba Division)

Betty Hopkins is the chair of the LEAF Manitoba Board of Directors. She has a Bachelor of Science degree and a Bachelor of Social Work. When “paid” she worked in child welfare, some community development and some basic fact-finding research.

Betty chose a career as a volunteer and has done so equivalent to full time employment. The resulting contribution to the community has been prodigious. Betty’s involvements are too numerous to list. Some highlights include:

- Worked extensively with women on social assistance
- Child care
- Women in prostitution
- Welfare rights and tenants groups regarding their rights and strategies for change
- Chaired John Howard of Canada and Elizabeth Fry Society of Manitoba Board
- A founding member and the first chair of the Elizabeth Fry Society of Manitoba
- Chaired the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies (C.A.E.F.S.) and various committees
- Past or current member of the following Executive and Boards:
  - John Howard of Canada
  - Children’s Home of Winnipeg
  - Social Planning Council of Winnipeg
  - United Way of Winnipeg & Canada
  - C.L.E.A.
  - Institute of Urban Studies
  - P.O.W.E.R.
  - Idea Centre Board
  - Peter Gzowski Golf Tournament for literacy
  - Centre Plan
  - UNPAC
  - Society of Manitobans with Disabilities
  - Community Living Manitoba
  - Winnipeg & Provincial Council of Women
  - Betty was also a member of the LEAF Manitoba LEAF Foundation Fundraising Branch

In October 1999, she completed 4 ½ years on the LEAF National Board where she chaired the Education work group and served on the Strategic Planning & Structure committee and the Executive.

In other involvements in the voluntary sector, Betty has assisted with various conference planning groups, various justice groups, task forces including the Solicitor General’s Task Force on Women who receive Federal Sentences, Solicitor General’s task force on the role of the voluntary sector/alternative sentencing and restorative justice work, etc.

Betty has always promoted community/citizen “ownership” and participation. Her special interest was in governance issues and policy work groups. Betty wrote or assisted with writing of briefs, philosophy and policy statements, program and budget proposals and analyses, job descriptions, board development plans and manuals, community information and education packages (and presentations). She has emphasized non-hierarchical, non-competitive ways of working, mutual respect
and support, collaboration and shared leadership, with a focus on the importance of social justice issues and the concerns and perspectives of women, youth and all “cultures.”

Betty has received several recognitions or awards including the YWCA Women of the Year/Women of Distinction Award.

**Lucia Jofre** presently works as a Social Worker with the Women’s Advisory Program of the Department of Justice. This program provides services to female victims of domestic violence where criminal charges have been laid.

Lucia has served on many Boards and Committees and she was recently elected as the Manitoba Board member of the National Organization of the Immigrant Women’s Association of Manitoba.

Originally from Chile, Lucia is a member of the Spanish speaking community and she is the founder of the Spanish Speaking Seniors Club. Her personal interest toward seniors got her involved as a found member of ETHOS, the Multicultural Seniors Coalition of Manitoba.

**Paula Leslie** is a Crown Attorney with Manitoba Justice Prosecutions in the Domestic Violence Unit. Paula received her BA at the University of Winnipeg and her LLB from the University of Calgary. Paula’s commitment to equality and human rights is demonstrated through her volunteer commitment on the boards of both LEAF Manitoba and the Rainbow Resource Centre, and her volunteer involvement with the Equality Committee at University of Calgary Law School, the Manitoba Women’s Advisory Council, the National Residential Schools Legacy Conference, the Women’s Health Clinic, Student Legal Assistance, and her work with the pilot project with a legal clinic in a homeless shelter in downtown Calgary.

**Maxine MacRae** is a retired Registered Laboratory Technologist who worked in clinics and hospitals in Manitoba and British Columbia. She has utilized her B.A. (Hons) in Anthropology from the University of Winnipeg in doing research projects for the Manitoba Museum, and the Canadian Red Cross, Maxine has been active in the Big Brother Big Sister organization and has been a Big Sister for the past 11 years.

She has filled many of the offices in Powertalking International (ITC), where she is currently volunteers with the Red Cross and is active in LEAF Manitoba’s annual fundraising Persons Day Breakfast. Maxine was the Co-chair for the 2005 Breakfast, Chairperson of the 2006 Breakfast and Venue Chair in 2007; she is currently LEAF’s secretary.

**Loretta Ross** has been a lawyer with Myers Weinberg LLP since 2005. Formerly was in house counsel for the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs 1994-2005. Loretta has volunteered as a steering committee member of the Empowering Our Little Sisters Program, a reflection of her commitment to First Nations peoples. She brings in her life and in her work awareness of and deep commitment to the rights of Aboriginal women and children. Loretta is a volunteer with Transforming Our Future LEAF MB. Her extensive experience, knowledge and wisdom will enrich the program and will ensure the program’s relevance.

**Anne Turner** is a Crown prosecutor with the Public Prosecution Service of Canada. She received her law degree from the University of Manitoba in 2002 and her BA in Conflict Resolution Studies from the University of Winnipeg in1999. Anne is also as active Board member with Villa Rosa and works with the Winnipeg Drug Treatment Court. Anne is currently working with LEAF Manitoba on a new program being offered to community groups. Transforming Our Future.

**Beatrice E. Watson** presently works for the Manitoba Human Rights Commission. She received her BA from the University of Manitoba and is a graduate student at the University of Manitoba, pursuing graduate work in feminist Anthropology. Beatrice is working also toward her certificate in Management Development for Women.

Her work as a freelance journalist has appeared in the Winnipeg Free Press, London Free Press, Herizon Magazine, the Toronto Sun and in the book “Spider Women – A Tapestry of Creativity & Healing.” She has been heard locally on CBC Radio.

Beatrice was a founding member of the Selkirk Co-op Abuse against Women and serves as a volunteer mediator with the Manitoba Justice Centre and a volunteer Peer Counselor at the
Fort Garry Women’s Resource Centre where she is on the Board. She has co-chaired the Manitoba Anti-Poverty Organization. She is the treasurer for the Guyanese Cultural Organization and volunteers at Folklorama. She is the vice-president of The Creative Foundation.
L.E.A.F. INVITES YOUR MEMBERSHIP

Join L.E.A.F. in “making the law work for women”. LEAF is a national organization which promotes equality for women through legal action and public education based on the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

L.E.A.F. is concerned with the multiple oppression suffered by many women because of their colour, national or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, age or disability, as well as their sex.

Members are important to L.E.A.F.’s work. They are the “shareholders” of the organization, reflecting the wide ownership of and commitment to the goals, philosophy and work.

Advantages of Membership:
- Satisfaction of participating in ground-breaking litigation
- Making the Charter work for everyone
- Receiving our national and Manitoba newsletters
- Notification of LEAF Manitoba/Winnipeg events
- Voting rights at the LEAF Manitoba annual general meeting
- Contribution to the advancement of equality and justice for all women.

Please return this form with a cheque payable to L.E.A.F. Manitoba
205-414 Graham Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3C 0L8
Tel/Fax: 204-453-1379 Email: leafmb@mts.net

APPLICATION FOR L.E.A.F. MEMBERSHIP

I support the education and litigation objectives of L.E.A.F., which include the promotion of equality for women in areas such as economic, and employment rights, rights within personal relationships, and the right to reproductive freedom.

Name
__________________________

Address __________________________ postal code

Telephone home ______ business ______ fax

Email ___________________________ Occupation ___________________________

Please consider the following guidelines when choosing a membership fee:
Regular ($25)/ Senior, Student, unemployed or equivalent ($7.50)/ Organization ($30).

Your membership fees $___________
Donation:
  LEAF MB WISE Endowment at Wpg Fdn* $___________
  LEAF National* $___________
  *Tax receipts issued for amounts over $10
Total cheque amount $___________

I would like to provide additional support to LEAF MB by contributing my time to the following areas:
- Fundraising and Finance
- Breakfast Committee
- Public Education
- Speakers Bureau
- Special Events
- Legal Work
- Membership Committee
- Library Maintenance
- Administrative Support

Please return this form with a cheque payable to *L.E.A.F. Manitoba* to
LEAF Manitoba, 205-414 Graham Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R3C 0L8
For Immediate Release

Supreme Court of Canada affirms equality principles in family law
Decision a victory for women in Rick v Brandsema

February 19, 2009

The Supreme Court of Canada has upheld and taken equality principles in family law one step further today in its decision in *Rick v Brandsema* – a move welcomed by West Coast LEAF and LEAF.

“In our intervention in the case, we argued that a separation agreement should not be treated like a commercial contract in the law,” says LEAF counsel, Nitya Iyer. “We’re pleased that the Court agreed that the negotiation of separation agreements presents a unique set of circumstances, power relations, and vulnerabilities for women.”

In dispute was a separation agreement that left Mr. Brandsema with substantially more assets than Ms. Rick after 27 years of marriage. Ms. Rick suffered mental health challenges when the agreement was signed and identified herself as a survivor of domestic violence. Mr. Brandsema’s full disclosure of his assets was also in question.

In its unanimous decision, The Supreme Court of Canada found that the parties’ separation agreement was unfair and invalid because Mr. Brandsema exploited Ms. Rick’s vulnerabilities and purposely misled her about the state of their financial affairs. The decision establishes a firm right to equality in the negotiation of separation agreements.

“Another important principle established in this case,” says West Coast LEAF Executive Director Alison Brewin, “is a firm statement that getting legal advice does not automatically mean both parties are equal. The Court of Appeal initially suggested that just because Ms. Rick had *some* access to legal advice, the agreement was fair – which was not the case. If the Court of Appeal decision had stood, imagine the implications for women in the current climate who can only access a patchwork of legal advice.”

For more information about the case please go to


And for the decision, go to:

Media Contact:
Alison Brewin, West Coast LEAF
(604) 684-8772 x 111

The West Coast Legal Education and Action Fund (West Coast LEAF) formed when the equality guarantees of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms came into force. Our mission is to achieve equality by changing historic patterns of systemic discrimination against women through BC-based equality rights litigation, law reform and public legal education.

LEAF is a national, non-profit organization committed to using the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to promote equality for women and girls. Through legal action, public education, and law reform, LEAF is committed to confront all forms of discrimination in its efforts to achieve equality for women.
For Immediate Release

LEAF Granted leave in Micmac Nation of Gespeg v. Canada

Toronto, February 25, 2009 – The Women’s Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF) has been granted leave to intervene in Micmac Nation of Gespeg v. Canada at the Federal Court of Appeal.

This is the first case, following the 2008 Supreme Court of Canada decision in R. v. Kapp to interpret s.15(2) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and its application to affirmative action programs. At issue in Micmac Nation of Gespeg v. Canada is whether affirmative action programs that exclude a disadvantaged group from participation are still considered ‘ameliorative’ and hence cannot be challenged as discriminatory. LEAF is intervening to ensure s. 15 (2) of the Charter is not used to marginalize already disadvantaged groups.

The Micmac Nation of Gespeg is a landless Band whose members live in the Gespeg region and surrounding Montreal area. In 2004, Band members in elementary and postsecondary schools who had previously received financial assistance from a Federal Government program were disqualified on the basis that the Program was available only to residents on reserve or Crown land. As the Micmac Nation has no treaty land of its own, Band members were disqualified from receiving payments under the Program.

The Micmac Nation argues their exclusion from the Program constitutes discrimination. The Crown will argue the Program is ameliorative and hence cannot be challenged as discriminatory. LEAF will argue that s. 15(2) of the Charter should not be used to protect from challenge a program that excludes disadvantaged groups.

The hearing date at the Federal Court of Appeal has not yet been determined.

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For more information please visit our website at:
http://www.leaf.ca/legal/active.html#target

For information regarding the Kapp decision visit out website at:
http://leaf.ca/media/articles/Kapp.pdf#target

Contact:
Audrey Johnson
Executive Director, LEAF
416-595-7170 ext 225

LEAF is a national, non profit organization committed to confront all forms of discrimination through legal action, public education, and law reform to achieve equality for women and girls under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.