



## INTERIM PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends of MCW,  
 May the coming year be filled with joy, laughter and good fortune for you, your family and friends.  
 The past year has been difficult and somewhat disappointing particularly for the citizens of Montreal. The general public has been plagued by despairing issues such as the student upheaval, the language police, construction issues, mayoralty charges and the increase in Quebec's deficit reaching the billions of dollars. The year ended with the presentation of Bill 60 which attacks individual rights. The purpose of this bill is to establish a charter affirming the values of State secularism and religious neutrality and of equality between women and men, while also providing a venue for accommodation requests. We as citizens must face the challenge to endorse change. Montreal must regain the respect it deserves. By being informed we can and must work to achieve a state of success and of personal freedom.

In lieu of holding an evening Gala to celebrate MCW's 120th Anniversary, the MCW decided to hold a cocktail party followed by a presentation that addressed the importance of Bill 60. The purpose of the presentation was to present three views of the impending "Bill 60." We were extremely fortunate to have Pearl Eliadis, an award winning human rights lawyer, who has specialized in international human rights law. Me Eliadis presses for social justice at the community, national and international levels, advising many NGO's and public interest groups. Me Shahad Salman joined Me Eliadis in the presentation to the MCW and their guests. Me Salman, who is of Iraqi origin, has travelled to Iraq and visited the country's

post-war institutions. Unfortunately, our third speaker sent her regrets at the last minute. However, there was a clear presentation of the proposed Bill.

We thank our guest speakers who took time away from their busy schedules to address the MCW. The presentations were exceptional and the question period following their presentations was outstanding. We could have easily added another hour to the question period! Please see a summary of Bill 60 in this edition of the Bulletin.

There have been several inquiries from our members concerning the 120th souvenir book that we were planning to complete for November 2013. I would like to assure our members that the "History of Members Book" in which most of our members have contributed, will be completed in the near future. It certainly turned out to be a much larger undertaking than expected.

Many thanks are extended to all members who provided an excellent lunch at the November meeting. We are very fortunate to have such willing members to help out at our lunches. A special thank you to Frances Gregory and her team who organize the lunches; we feel that our noon lunches are important to MCW members and friends.

To acknowledge International Women's Day in March, we are very fortunate to have a presentation by Barbara Kay, National Post columnist and writer of "Unworthy Creature - A Punjabi Memoir of Honor, Shame and Love". We look forward to the upcoming presentations.

*- Bonnie Stamos Destounis, Interim President*

### UPCOMING GENERAL MEETING

Come join us on Thursday, February 6, 2014 for MCW's monthly general meeting at Les Jardins du Canal, 2700 Rufus Rockhead (opposite the Atwater Market, metro Lionel Groulx, bus 108).

February is **Heart Month** and our guest speaker will be **Dr. Colin Rose** and his wife **Mrs. Sandra Cohen-Rose** will be speaking on '**Cardiometabolic Disease and Lifestyle**'.

A light lunch (\$10 per person) will be served at 12:00 noon and our program will begin at 1:00 pm.

Please contact our hostess Convenor, Ms. Frances Gregory email: [frances.gregory@videotron.ca](mailto:frances.gregory@videotron.ca) or Tel. (514) 935-1674 should you be attending our luncheon.

### 120<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY COCKTAIL OF THE MONTREAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN

In 2013 the Montreal Council of Montreal celebrated its 120<sup>th</sup> year anniversary. A variety of events were organized during the year, including a celebratory cocktail held at Montreal's City Hall and a panel discussion on the Charter of Secular Values (Bill 60) held at the Omni Hotel, which was also preceded by a cocktail hour. As Vice-President of Government Affairs, I had the privilege of organizing these two memorable events, along with the MCW 120<sup>th</sup> committee co-chairs, former MCW President Bonnie Destounis and MCW President Vivianne Silver, as well as other members of the MCW Board of Directors.

The 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary cocktail at Montreal's City Hall, which was hosted by the Mayor of Montreal, was well attended by MCW board members, Federate members and individual members of the MCW. After a brief speech by

**EXCERPTS OF RECENT SPEECHES IN  
PARLIAMENT**

**MONTREAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN**

Statement in the House of Commons  
November 29, 2013 by Irwin Cotler

Mr. Speaker, this evening, the Montreal Council of Women will celebrate its 120th anniversary. Since 1893, the council has brought together organizations and individuals from the Montreal region to improve the quality of life of women and their families, and communities.

The Montreal Council of Women has 30,000 members from diverse backgrounds who work together in a spirit of tolerance and mutual respect.

the Mayor congratulating the MCW on its 120<sup>th</sup> year and its contributions to Montrealers, the nearly 200 attendees, including those of the Mayor's cabinet and a number of municipal councillors, all mingled and chatted during the cocktail period. Everyone present agreed that it was a memorable celebration!



Pat Nichols, Chitra Chopra, Bonnie Destounis, Me Pearl Eliadis, Me Shahad Salman, Vivianne Silver, Hon. Eleni Bakopanos, Frances Gregory, Marilyn Berger and Marjorie Windeler

Historically one of the most significant roles of the MCW is to educate, promote and advocate for women's rights. Therefore, in celebrating the 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the MCW Board agreed to collaborate with the Women's Commission of the Liberal Party of Canada (Quebec) and organize, a debate on Bill 60.

*In the fall of 2013 the Parti Quebecois Government, tabled in the National Assembly, The Charter of Secular Values, Bill 60, a "Charter affirming the values of State secularism and religious neutrality and of equality between women and men, providing a framework for accommodation requests". The bill was introduced by Bernard Drainville, PQ Minister responsible for Democratic Institutions and Active Citizenship.*

It is to be noted, that if Bill 60 is adopted, it will impact directly on the rights of all Quebec women. Therefore, on Friday, November 29<sup>th</sup>, I invited, on behalf of the MCW and the QWLC, two distinguished lawyers, McGill lecturers and eminent international human rights experts, Maitre Pearl Eliadis and Maitre Shahad Salman, to each present their perspective on Bill 60.

Maitre Pearl Eliadis presented a detailed and comprehensive analysis of the positive and negative impact of the Bill on Quebec's minorities, especially women. On the positive side, Bill 60 reaffirms the values of state secularism and religious neutrality and the equality between women and men. However, Maitre Eliadis emphasized that the negative aspects of the bill far outweigh the positive, especially as it concerns the protection of minority rights and freedoms in Quebec.

*Maitre Eliadis stated the following:*

**"We already have a set of "values" in this country, and it is called the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The rights contained in it are of course, constitutional rights, but they also reflect our commitment in international law to minorities including religious minorities. The Charter of Values is unconstitutional, it infringes Canada's inter-national obligations, and it violates Québec's own charter of human rights and freedoms. Even if the government decides to remove human rights protections from Québec's law, this will not change Canada's Charter nor Québec's international obligations".**

The Quebec Bar has publically taken the same position and in fact questions the constitutionality of Bill 60. As well, many public institutions, such as hospitals, educational institutions and municipalities, have opposed the Bill and have publically stated that if Bill 60 is adopted, they will not apply the law in their institutions.



Maitre Shahad Salman was invited, as a Muslim woman living and working in Quebec, to present a personal viewpoint on Bill 60. She agreed with Maitre Eliadis that Bill 60 is an "attack" on religious freedoms and violates

minority rights, especially the rights and freedoms of Quebec's Muslim citizens. More importantly he Bill is dividing Quebecers and has contributed to the rise of discrimination and racism against Quebec's Muslim minorities, especially Muslim women. Maitre Salman stated: **"Bill 60 is the proof that women's rights must be a continuous struggle as it highly hinders equality between women and men"**.



The majority of the more than eighty guests, after having congratulated the 2 exceptional speakers, expressed their own concerns during the question and answer period, about Bill 60 and the negative impact that the Charter will have on the co-existence of the francophone majority with the Anglophone and allophone minorities in Quebec. Since Bill 60 was introduced there has been a shift in race relations in the province, depicting, even on the international scene, Quebecers as intolerant and racist.



In fact, it is my opinion and that of many people that Bill 60 was introduced by the Marois PQ government for purely political reasons, that is, to win a majority in the next provincial election, which is rumoured to take place as early as March 2014. In my opinion, Bill 60 panders to the lowest common denominator of Quebecers' fear of the unknown and immigrants. In fact, much of the recent testimony at the National Assembly's public hearings on Bill 60, which convened this month, was in support of the Charter and was anecdotal testimony by francophone Quebecers living in Quebec's regions, where they have little or no contact with immigrants. A recent poll by Leger found the strongest support for Bill 60, at 43%, comes from the francophone

majority in Quebec, especially those living in the regions. In fairness, I should point out that there are some Quebecers from minority communities who strongly support the values of state secularism and religious neutrality expressed in the Charter. However, I strongly believe Bill 60 is an infringement of our rights and freedoms and I urge all MCW members to stand up and speak up against its implementation!

The Montreal Council of Women will continue to provide Montreal women with the opportunity to be informed on important issues, be it their health, the environment, seniors' rights, education, the media, to name but a few of the topics discussed at our monthly luncheon meetings with presentations by knowledge-able speakers. In addition, the MCW will continue to exercise a leadership role in advocating for women's rights and freedoms in our society by organizing other events, such as this debate, on important public policy issues. - *Honourable Eleni Bakopanos*

*MCW Vice-President for Government Affairs*



**QUEBEC NATIONAL ASSEMBLY BILL 60  
INTRODUCED BY MR. BERNARD DRAINVILLE  
MINSITER RESPONSIBLE FOR DEMOCRATIC  
INSTITUTIONS AND ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP -**

**A CHARTER AFFIRMING THE VALUES OF STATE  
SECULARISM AND RELIGIOUS NEUTRALITY AND  
OF EQUALITY BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN,  
PROVIDING A FRAMEWORK FOR  
ACCOMODATION REQUESTS**

**“Preamble to Bill 60 as found on Quebec National  
Assembly’s website.”**

The purpose of this Bill is to establish a charter affirming the values of state secularism and religious neutrality and of Public bodies must, in the pursuit of their mission remain neutral in religious matters and reflect the secular nature of the state. Accordingly, obligations are set out for personnel members of public bodies in the exercise of their functions, including a duty to remain neutral and exercise reserve in religious matter, by among other things, complying with the restriction on wearing religious objects that overtly indicate a religious affiliation. As well, personnel members of a public body must exercise their functions within the administrative branch, and to personnel members of the National Assembly. The same rule applies to other persons, in particular to persons who exercise judicial functions or adjudicative functions within the administrative branch and to personnel members of the National Assembly.

The Bill defines, in the Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms, what constitutes an accommodation resulting from application of the Charter, and sets out the conditions for granting such an accommodation. An analytical framework is also provided to facilitate the handling of accommodation requests submitted by public bodies on religious grounds.

Public bodies are required to adopt a policy to implement the prescriptions of the Bill. Special rules are provided for the educational childcare services sector. The Act respecting the National Assembly is amended to specifically grant the Assembly power to regulate the wearing of religious symbols by Members, and grant the Office of the National Assembly the power to approve the presence of a religious symbol in the premises of the assembly. Finally the Government is granted powers to facilitate the application of the bill and transitional and final provisions are introduced.

**LEGISLATION AMENDED BY THIS BILL:**

- Act respecting the National Assembly (chapter A-23.1)
- Charter of human rights and freedoms (chapter C-12)
- Educational Childcare Act (chapter S-4.1.1)



**Resolutions 101: The Old and the New Way!**

MCW will celebrate Heart Month on February 6, 2014 and it is exciting to have a husband and wife team presenting a program on Cardiometabolic Disease and Lifestyle.

We thank Dr. Colin Rose, M.D. Ph.D., Cardiologist and Associate Professor McGill University, and his wife, registered dietitian and home economist Sandra Cohen Rose, who is also a past President of MCW.

However, we are just starting a brand new year, January, I am told, is named in honour of a Roman god, Janus. He rewarded the faithful worshipper who offered up promises of good conduct and fine intentions. Incidentally, the largest portion of our yearly resolutions relate to changes of personal habits and behaviours.

By mid-July, as many as sixty percent of us, are still bent and determined to honour and keep our intentions. Science is also firmly on our side as we can make significant and lasting changes with next to no scientific training. The following five part system can assure our success, regardless of the type of resolutions we might be considering:

1. The psyche is a time when our mind is conscious of a natural thirst or desire for change.
2. The preparation step includes processes where we plan out our intentions, find the needed tools, and engage a support system.
3. The perspire stage is the actual work involved in implementing the plan and rewarding ourselves appropriately along the way.
4. The persevere period is when temptation makes us fall off the wagon, ouch!
5. The persistence phase is forgiveness and continued practice of this amazing circle of change.

So please bring us your stories of past and present victories. There is plenty of time yet to make brand new promises to ourselves and to others. Let's fall in love with our lives all over again. Let us cherish our hearts and love its might and beauty. Let us work together to build a more secure and luminous future. Janus is already rewarding us.

John Hopkins University researchers have noted stronger cognitive abilities, in certain areas, some 24 hours after ingesting a cup of coffee in over a hundred subjects under study. I could have told them that! I have always felt a lot less brain dead with a cup of coffee in my hand, than without!

- *Nadia Baraghi, Convener  
Health, Child, and Family on the Board of MCW*

## Seniors Action Quebec Officially Launched

Seniors Action Quebec (SAQ) was officially launched in Montreal, on November 19, 2013 by Mr. Graham Fraser, the Commissioner of Official Languages. Seniors Action Quebec is a new provincial network for English-speaking seniors that plans to provide a provincial voice that will influence program and policy change to address the needs of Quebec's English-speaking seniors.

Mr. Fraser chose the launch to release his study "Enjoying Your Senior Years in Your Own Language, Culture and Community: Federal support from key institutions and a portrait of English-speaking seniors in Quebec." This report will provide SAQ with an evidence base on English-speaking seniors and will be invaluable as it moves forward. You can find it here:

[http://www.officiallanguages.gc.ca/html/stu\\_etu\\_112013\\_e.php](http://www.officiallanguages.gc.ca/html/stu_etu_112013_e.php)

Priorities for Seniors Action Quebec include:

- Developing seniors' leadership across the province.
- Encouraging governments at all levels to work in partnership with seniors to ensure policies and programs that address the needs and challenges facing seniors
- Working with municipal authorities to create "age friendly cities" and promote a healthy active lifestyle.
- Working with partners to create programs that will better meet the needs of English-speaking seniors.
- Improving access to information to help ensure that English-speaking seniors have a better quality of life in their own communities.
- Celebrating the contributions of English-speaking seniors and organizations working on their behalf.

As part of our involvement to work on policy, we attended the International Age-friendly Cities Conference in Quebec City in September which resulted in our being invited to the table of the Sous-comité des partenaires nationaux non gouvernementaux représentant les intérêts des aînés sponsored by the Ministre de la Santé et des Services Sociaux et Ministre Responsable des Aînés in Quebec City on February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

We are helping to highlight seniors' contributions and leadership through our New Horizons Grant "Celebrating Seniors' Contributions" events, with the first one held on October 1, 2013, National Seniors Day and other events to be held in several regions throughout Quebec at different dates prior to the end of March, 2014.

CSSS Cavendish Network: Other partners in other regions are monitoring the situation and its impact on their regions and will be ready to get involved if needed.

Should you wish to become a member of Seniors Action Quebec, I can email you a membership form, or you can pick one up at the welcome desk at the next MCW luncheon meeting.

We have applied for several grants to help us to better serve our seniors and fill the gaps needed to obtain required services.

On November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013, at the request of several seniors' organizations and individual seniors in Montreal, Seniors Action Quebec formed an ad hoc committee with them to discuss the lack of adequate home-care services for seniors who were being released from a hospital stay under Program 68. The committee decided to prepare a Petition for distribution, which described the need of the CSSSs to provide adequate home-care services to help seniors to stay in their homes in a safe, stable and healthy environment upon discharge from hospital. This program has been given a name change to "*Programme d'hébergement pour évaluation*" (PHPE), and institutions must discharge patients when they are deemed "stable", pending fines if they fail to comply to send the patients home with home-care services within 8 days after being declared "medically stable". At the moment, home-care services provided are neither adequate nor equally available in all CSSSs in the Montreal Region. This Petition will end on January 31<sup>st</sup>. It is available in both English and French through the following members of the ad hoc committee (some members of MCW): Please consider signing this Petition. If you wish to support us and obtain signatures for the Petition, a copy could be emailed to you upon request.

Seniors Action Quebec

NDG Senior Citizens' Council

Contactivity Centre

CCS Community Services

N.D.G. Community Committee on Elder Abuse (CCEA)

The Cummings Centre

New Hope Senior Citizens' Centre

English-Speaking Catholic Council

Lyna Boushel

Executive Committee, Member-at-large

Seniors Action Quebec

[lyna.boushel@gmail.com](mailto:lyna.boushel@gmail.com)

### Article and Announcement Submissions

The next issue of **The Bulletin** will be in February 2014. Please submit your articles, announcements and photos by the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the month. Send via email to: [sagyles@sympatico.ca](mailto:sagyles@sympatico.ca), Tel. 450-672-7081