

# Ottawa Council of Women 2017 January Bulletin

*Women working together to  
Improve the lives of women,  
their families and  
communities*



2016/17 Theme:  
*Safety and Security  
of Persons*

Contact us : [www.ottawacw.ca](http://www.ottawacw.ca)

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*Welcome , 2016/17 Ottawa Council of Women Federate Members :*

- \* Acorn
- \* Anglican Church Women, Ottawa Diocese
- \* Beta –Sigma Phi, Ottawa
- \* Carefor Health Community Service
- \* Canadian Federation of University Women of Kanata
- \* Canadian Federation of University Women of Ottawa
- \* Dominion-Chalmers United Church Women
- \* Home Economics Association of Ottawa
- \* Multifaith Housing Initiative
- \* Ontario Association of Social Workers- Eastern Branch
- \* Ottawa City Union, Order of King's Daughters & Sons
- \* Polish Canadian Women's Federation Ottawa #8
- \* Ottawa Presbyterial United Church Women
- \* Quota Club of Ottawa
- \* Retire- at - Home
- \* Retired Women Teachers of Ontario/Ottawa
- \* Rideau Park United Church Women
- \* The Council on Aging of Ottawa
- \* Ukrainian Women's Association – Ottawa
- \* Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health
- \* Zonta Club of Ottawa

## **Notice of Meeting and Invitation**

**Ottawa Council of Women**

**January 2017 General Meeting**

**Tuesday, January 17, 2017**

**at Rideau Park United Church**

**2203 Alta Vista Drive/ Cunningham**

**11:00 am. Business Meeting**

**11:45 am. Light Lunch available**

**12:noon to 1:00 pm.Speaker Presentation**

**Theme:" Planning our New Central Public  
Library- location, services  
and opportunities for all"**

**Information and Discussion with:**

**Elaine Condos, Central Library Project Lead  
Anna Basile, Manager, Planning and Board  
Support**

**Allan Higdon, Board Member**

**For info: Sheila Perry, OCW VP and  
Program Chair, 613 407-7434  
[www.ottawacw.ca](http://www.ottawacw.ca)**

## **You've Come a Long Way Baby - The Ottawa Council of Women's Role In the Establishment of the First Free Ottawa Public Library**

*Texts with the kind permission of James Powell,  
editor of the website "Today in Ottawa's History"*



The Evening Journal — Woman's Edition,  
13 April 1895

This special edition of *The Evening Journal* was in support of the creation of a "Free" or Public Library in Ottawa. At that time, library resources in the Capital was essentially limited to the Parliamentary Library, the University of Ottawa library and the library of the Ottawa Literary and Scientific Society (OLSS). The OLSS, which had a small, circulation

collection of roughly 3,100 volumes in 1895, was funded by Society members and an annual grant from the Ontario government. The Ottawa Council of Women, founded by Lady Aberdeen, together with women's church groups and other charities, were the principal advocate of a free Ottawa Library that would be open to all. The special newspaper edition was a way of rallying support for the initiative. More tangibly, the profits from the issue would form the nucleus of a library fund. Library supporters hoped that others would contribute and, in time, lead to a grant from the City that would fund a Public Library."



**Lady Aberdeen, Wife of Canada's Governor General, 1893-1898, prominent early feminist and contributor to the "Woman's Edition of *The Evening Journal*, Library & Archives Canada, PA-2276**

***From the President:***

*A very happy, healthy, prosperous and successful New Year to all members and friends of the Ottawa Council of Women and a happy 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year of Canada.*

*For 123 years the National and Local Councils of Women have played an important role in shaping Canada with some of their historically important Council policies and actions. Over the last two years I have been sharing with you some of these policies from the pages of our 1994 Centennial Calendar. We are not done with those policies yet. During the last few months we have been advocating on removing financial barriers to receiving homecare with one of our longer term members, Carefor, the former Victorian Order of Nurses, which was established by Lady Aberdeen and the Council of Women in 1897. Congratulations and thank you to all our members for having been part of our Council and its work for these many years.*

*But if our Council is to continue further into the future, we need enthusiastic new Board members to fill the positions that are necessary for a smooth effective operation. When our OCW nomination forms arrive in your inbox, please consider accepting the invitation to serve or to recommend and encourage one of your members.*

*In this issue of the newsletter, I am sharing another successful historic campaign of our local Council, the establishment of the Ottawa Public Library. I want to thank Mr. James Powell who with his website pages "Today in Ottawa History" shone a light on the work of Ottawa Council of Women. Do visit the website to find out more about the women-only newspaper edition. We hope that you come out to our General Meeting on January 17 and learn from the speakers from the current Central Ottawa Public Library about the plans for a new Central Ottawa Public Library. In the age of the internet it is particularly important for our people, our children and our democracy that there are places accessible for everyone where we can inform ourselves on the facts and reliable truths. We can watch daily how incredibly truth and facts shift in the twittering hands of some politicians down South.*

*Edeltraud Neal*



**From “Today in Ottawa History” - April 30, 1906**

“ Mass education was viewed by elites with suspicion. It might lead people to question their station in life. In a largely agrarian society, knowing how to plough fields, grow crops, and raise livestock were deemed far more important skills for the common person than reading and writing.

Ideas became to shift during the industrial revolution. Social reformers started to advocate in favour of educating workers in order to advance science and reduce superstition. Increasingly, an educated workforce was seen as an economic blessing rather than a social curse. With thousands of men and women pouring into the cities seeking employment in those “dark satanic mills,” the Church and temperance supporters hoped that edifying lectures and libraries would reduce crime and keep people out of bars and brothels during their (limited) time off ....

In 1882, the Ontario Government passed the *Free Libraries Act*, allowing municipalities to establish public libraries funded out of local taxes with the assent of the ratepayers. A number of cities across the province, including Toronto, took advantage of this new legislation and established public libraries for their citizens. In these cases, the libraries of local mechanics’ institutions were transferred to the new municipally-run libraries. In Ottawa, however, the new legislation had little impact.

During the early 1890s, the Ottawa Council of Women began to lobby for the establishment of a free library in the Capital. In February 1895, the Council, chaired by Lady Aberdeen, the wife of the Governor General, issued the following statement:

**“Whereas the Local Council of Women of Ottawa feel that the establishment of a Free Library would be a benefit to the city, resolved: That this Council recommend that the subject be brought prominently before the public through the medium of the press and that a petition to the city council in accordance with the terms of the *Free Libraries Act*, be prepared for circulation by the Women’s Council.”**

In March 1895, the Council of Women submitted its petition to the city with 280 signatures (almost triple the number required by law). The city then prepared a draft by-law establishing a free library to be voted on by Ottawa ratepayers at the upcoming municipal elections. Ratepayers consisted of men over 21 years of age who owned property in excess of \$400. Single women and widows who met the property requirement could also vote. The Council of Women then launched an advertising campaign in support of a free library. With the support of Philip Ross, the editor of *The Evening Journal*, the Council of Woman published the “Woman’s Edition” of the newspaper in April 1895, with all profits of the edition going to a fund for the free library. In this edition, all the articles, stories and letters were written and edited by women. Front and centre were articles in support of a free library. The movement got a further boost when the heirs of William Perley, a lumber baron, offered the Perley mansion on Wellington Street as home for the new library.

However, the efforts of the women came up short. In the vote held in January 1896, the city’s eight wards all decisively turned down the idea of a public library, with the popular vote 1,958 for and 3,429 against.

It seemed that cost of running a library, estimated at about \$10,000 per year, was too steep for ratepayers. Instead of becoming a library, the Perley mansion became “The Perley Home for Incurables” until the land was expropriated by the Dominion government in 1912. (In the long run, the location did become a library; the site is now the home of Library and Archives Canada.)

The Council of Women did not give up, and continued to press the issue at city council. But councilmen, while supporting the idea of a free library, collectively continued to reject the idea as being too costly. In 1899, a draft by-law was defeated on second reading on a vote of 13-11. By the early 1900s, with over 400 public libraries in Ontario, Ottawa was looking decidedly backward.



**Andrew Carnegie, 1835-1919**

**Theodore C. Moreau, Library of Congress**

Salvation came from the United States. In 1901, Otto Klotz, past president of the OLSS and husband of Marie Klotz who was a leading light in the Ottawa Council of Women’s fight for a public library, wrote Andrew Carnegie, the prominent, Scottish-born, American philanthropist for funds to build a free, public library in Ottawa. The day after Klotz sent his letter, Ottawa mayor W. D. Morris also petitioned Carnegie for funds. By this point, Carnegie had funded hundreds of libraries throughout the United States, Canada, and Britain. Within weeks of receiving the letters, Carnegie pledged \$100,000 to pay for an Ottawa Public Library, if Ottawa found a site and if it would agree to spend not less than \$ 7, 500 per year in upkeep”

After much political controversy and with many stops and starts, the Ottawa Public Library was opened on April 30<sup>th</sup> , 1906 with Andrew Carnegie in attendance.



**The Carnegie Library. Notice the stained glass window above the entrance, and the words “Ottawa Public Library” in raised letters on the lintel. Department of Mines and Technical Surveys/Library and Archives Canada, PA-023297.**



International Women's Day

## Save the date!

Our 2017 IWD party will be our 13th – and you'll want to be there!

Once again Ottawa Council of Women is joining local CFUW clubs at Centrepont on the evening of **Wednesday, March 8** for a celebration of women's achievements and progress. Mark your calendars now and invite your friends.

Features include:

- Polar Horizon's France Rivet, tells her story of Arctic history that resonates today. See <http://polarhorizons.com/en>
  - Musical guests *Twin Flames*, an award-winning duo who have been nominated for the Canadian Folk Music Aboriginal Songwriters of the Year Award. See them at <http://www.twinflamesmusic.com>
  - A Dessert Extravaganza – enjoy coffee and Treats'n'Sweets! Wine for sale by the glass.
- You can register online at the CFUW website [www.cfuw-ottawa.org](http://www.cfuw-ottawa.org) ; in person at our January and February General Meetings; or by telephone at 819 778-3438.



### National Council of Women Canada 2017 Calendar

- Jan 10 Resolutions circulated to membership for review
- Jan 30 Membership renewal invoices sent out
- Feb 28 Notice of Motion from Constitution Convenor Virginia Schweitzer
- Feb 28 AGM REGISTRATION PACKAGES OUT
- March 31 Deadline for Proposed Amendments to Resolutions to be received by Resolutions Convenor
- March 31 Deadline for Emerging Issues Resolutions to be received by Res. Convenor
- June 22-25 Annual General Meeting/Conference in Ottawa / Gatineau

This OCW Bulletin appears monthly. Members' short contributions welcome. Please e-mail your contribution *by the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month* to [news@ottawacw.ca](mailto:news@ottawacw.ca) or call 613-731-2737