



THE WEST AUSTRALIAN SOCIAL WORKER

President's Report

Isn't it amazing how quickly time goes by? Here we are with the State Conference nearly upon us and Branch elections to the Committee of Management (COM) happening right now!

As you can see by the enclosed materials there are vacancies on the COM for the Vice President for Ethics and Professional Practice as well as 6 committee member vacancies. Terms are for 2 years. The Committee is organised around a portfolio structure and new COM members can choose to work in one of the portfolio areas or get their "feet wet" by starting out generically.

The COM is a very important way to get involved with the activities of the profession, have your voice heard and to contribute to the wide range of services provided to members by the WA Branch - to really make a difference. And besides it's great fun to work together with other social workers and have an opportunity to network with a wide range of key people in the social work community. Why not give it a try - we'd love to have you!

Also don't forget that this year's State Conference is happening 5-9 September, with Tuesday through Thursday's events being held in Perth. For the first time ever the Branch is trialling a regional component to the Conference. Friday and Saturday's contributions will be held in Bunbury. So why not sign up for all or part of the Conference. The program is excellent and it promises to be an important professional opportunity. Don't forget you get double CPE points for attending!

Speaking of CPE points, if you haven't done so, now is the time to send your CPE log in to National Office. Why not attach it to your membership renewal?

When you comply with CPE requirements you are eligible to claim Accredited Social Worker status. At both the National and Branch level, energy will be focused this year on marketing the accredited social worker credential to employers.

Speaking of coming around quickly, the National Board meeting, which is held twice yearly has just come and gone. Held in Canberra the weekend of June 16th, some major issues were considered and significant decisions were made. More in-depth information will be provided once the minutes are finalised, but it is important to note that a decision was taken to ensure that all branches have access to administrative support for at least two days a week. This is a significant equity issue as smaller branches are unable to fund these. The WA Branch is so fortunate to have Liz Retamal whose support is key to the branch in providing the wide range of member services that it offers. Thanks as usual to Liz for her great work!

Another key issue discussed at the Board meeting was the Association's budget. Always a complex and controversial area, this year's budget discussions were no different. While the budget is not finalised yet, a major decision taken was to fully fund national program initiatives by the year 2001. This is likely to have significant implications for branches perhaps in terms of capitation formula or use of surplus funds. I'll keep you posted.

An online version of this newsletter can be found at
<http://westausaasw.highway1.com.au/>

Another significant decision was the creation by the Association of a Human Rights and Social Justice Trust Fund which will be available for contributions that will be used solely to address human rights and social justice issues. Also being considered is a national newsletter and perhaps a third Association publication that focuses on practice and policy. Again, I'll keep you posted.

In relation to the Branch, several new initiatives are on the horizon for the coming year. The Branch will pilot having a social policy project officer part time to assist the Branch in making more timely and more proactive responses to social policy matters. There is also a plan to seek media liaison help to better market the profession and to again help provide timely replies to social work issues in the media.

All in all, there is a range of very interesting and important initiatives happening. I hope you'll get involved with making some of them happen!

BARBARA MEDDIN
BRANCH PRESIDENT

SOCIAL WORK DAY

Do you remember Social Work Day? It went really well for me... How did it go for you? Did you use the party pack? Did you have a morning tea or luncheon? Did you do a shopping centre display?

Have you remembered to send us your own story or information? In case you've forgotten here is a gentle reminder. "Social workers often work in isolation or in areas where the work is so great that they rarely get a chance to pop their heads up and see what the rest of the social work world is doing.

With this in mind we are asking if you can tell us a bit about your organisation and where social workers fit in it. What is your role? What challenges do you meet? Who are your client population?

Do you have special publications that could be useful to other social workers? Are there many of you or do you work alone? What are your special interests? How can other social workers contact you?

Send us the story of social workers and their role in your organisation and we will collate all these stories into a small information and resource booklet and post it back out to you. Perhaps you'll read about social work roles that you didn't know existed. Perhaps someone will learn about you! Remember knowledge is power and by sharing our information we increase each other's knowledge."

If you haven't already done so, can you please send your information back ASAP. You can either fax it to (08) 9444 5410, email it to aaswwa@aasw.asn.au or post it to AASW PO Box 198, West Perth WA 6872.

NORMA WELSH
CONVENOR SOCIAL WORK DAY WORKING PARTY

IT'S A LONG ROAD

It's a Long Road is a resource for parents of children with disabilities, extended families and professionals working with families of children with disabilities. Designed to be used either at home or in a workshop situation, the video has a wealth of information and practical advice for families. One of the features of this video is that the issues and stages of grieving are broken into segments and subtitled so that individual parts of the program are easy to access.

The video is 52 minutes long and is accompanied by a resource list (within Australia only) to help mothers access counselling and link-up with other mothers.

It's a Long Road is a revealing and poignant portrayal of the emotional journey that four women have taken in their struggles to come to terms with having a child with a disability. Refreshingly real and honest, these women show great courage in sharing their deepest, darkest moments to help other mothers. The many stages of the grieving process are clearly shown by the mothers and through comments made by counsellors. Family relationships, the impact on siblings and the complex issue of genetics are also highlighted in this powerful and moving video.

As well as dealing with the difficult emotional issues, each mother seeks to give hope that the intensity of pain subsides, that life can once again be enjoyed. The video's strong message to mothers is to look after and be kind to yourself and seek help when you need it.

Copies of the video can be purchased through Carers Association of Western Australia, 378 Oxford Street, Mount Hawthorn WA 6016. Telephone (08) 9444 5922, Country free call 1800 242 636, Fax (08) 9444 8966

CPE EVENTS

Assessment and Treatment of Traumatized Children AASW (WA Branch) Seminar

24 July 2000, 8.45 am – 4.30 pm

Presenter: Suzanne Jenkins

Contact: Liz Retamal

Ph: (02) 9420 7240, Fax (08) 9444 5410

Email: aaswwa@aasw.asn.au

19th State Conference - WA Branch Accounting for Social Work Practice: Meeting the Challenge of Social Reconstruction

5-9 September 2000 (Perth/Bunbury)

Contact: Marian Maughan, Conference Project Officer

Ph: (08) 9330 2585 Fax: (08) 9317 3891

Email: aaswwa@aasw.asn.au

The Relationship Marathon – Meeting the Challenges Marriage and Relationship Education – National Conference

8-10 July 2000

Hillarys Boat Harbour – Perth

Contact: National Marriage Education Conference Perth 2000

PO Box 811, Claremont WA 6910

Ph: 0409 297 624, fax: (08) 9336 6745

Email: freopar@starwon.com.au, Website: www.meaa.asn.au

Stress, Trauma and Coping in Emergency Services and Allied Professions

Critical Incident Stress Management Foundation of Australian Inc
Conference

11-13 August 2000

Hilton on the Park, Melbourne

Contact: CISMFA, PO Box 173, North Carlton, Victoria 3054

Phone/fax: (03) 9347 9313

Creativity and Development: Services for the Future Mental Health Services 10th Annual Conference

29-31 August 2000

Adelaide Convention Centre

Contact: PO Box 192, Balmain NSW 2041

Ph: (02) 9926 6057, Fax: (02) 9926 7078

Email: enquiries@themhs.org

Riding the Rapids of Change National Local Government Community Development Conference

1-3 November 2000 – Perth

Contact: Community Perspectives, PO Box 107, Mt Hawthorn
WA 6016

Ph: (08) 9443 7322, Fax: (08) 9443 7423

Email: lgcsa@net1.nw.com.au

Promoting Equitable Societies in the Global Economy: Social Work in the 21st Century

Canadian Association of Social Workers World Conference

29 July – 2 August 2000

Montreal, Canada

Contact: CASW, Ph: (1) 613 729 6668, Fax: (1) 613 729 9608

Email: casw@casw acts.ca

National Respite Conference Respite: Choosing with Confidence

11-13 October 2000

Sheraton Perth Hotel

Contact: Ph: (08) 9332 2900, Fax: (08) 9332 2911

Email: promaco@promaco.com.au

4th National Allied Health Conference

Perth, Western Australia

14-16 March 2001

Contact: Moira Butler, Admin Assistant, Conference Secretariat

Fax: (08) 9381 1024

COMMUNITY SERVICES INDUSTRY AWARDS CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

Do you know an outstanding organisation or individual who demonstrates dedication and commitment to improving the lives of others within the Western Australian community? Then nominate them for a Community Services Industry Award 2000.

The awards recognise the achievements of those who have made a difference to the community and promote creative and responsive approaches to serving the needs of people across Western Australia.

Nominations and applications are open to individuals and organisations committed to supporting the wellbeing of Western Australians. Winners in each category will receive \$2,000 cash from the Lotteries Commission and the recognition that what they do really makes a difference.

For a nomination or application kit telephone (08) 9222 2833 or 1800 656 010 (freecall STD). If you would like more information visit the Community Services Industry Awards website at <http://www.fcs.wa.gov.au>.

Nominations close Friday 7 July
Applications close Friday 4 August 2000

NEW MEMBERS

The WA Branch would like to welcome the following new members who have recently joined the AASW:

- Lynette Buckley (Student Associate)
- Kay James
- Jane Irvine
- Katrina Etherington (Student Associate)
- Christian Grill (Royal Perth Hospital)

NET WATCH THE INTERNET ILLUSION

There is an exuberance following the introduction of new technologies that often bears a suspicious similarity to narcotic delusion. The possibilities take hold; the popular imagination leaps into Coleridgeesque reveries. The appearance of railroads, for instance, once prompted otherwise rational people to pronounce the imminent end of class stratification; as the rails annihilated the distances between rich and poor, a universal brotherhood of mankind would surely result. The arrival of the telephone similarly prompted others to declare the end of the city nearly a century before present day suburbanites more soberly decided that telecommuting was a mixed blessing at best.

The Internet has hardly been an exception; the age of the Web has set high watermarks for just this kind of Panglossian fever. In his book, *The Control Revolution: How the Internet is Putting Individuals in Charge and Changing the World We Know*, Andrew Shapiro continues this durable tradition, telling us the Internet brings with it a new era of universal empowerment.

This new paradigm of infinite, instantaneous feedback will break the tyranny of those intermediaries, gatekeepers and arbiters who at present assert a hammer lock on our culture. The Internet is the great leveler, we are told, where everybody's voice is broadcast at equal volume, and all information sinks or swims purely on its own merit. Or so the theory goes.

Much of this book is devoted to the real and potential hazards that come from everybody being wired which is exactly why his voice is such a welcome addition to the seeming scores of other less circumspect cyber philosophers. The Internet has touched off such a frenzy of blue sky prognostication and commercial euphoria that relatively few people have taken the time to stand back and develop a clear headed perspective on what it all might mean in the long run. Fortunately, Shapiro doesn't look away from the task.

He arrives at some interesting conclusions while pondering a tendency of the collective online consciousness toward what he likes to call "oversteer." Oversteer is the way we handle our new power so carelessly as to incur unintended consequences. All this new potential for connection, for instance, may actually be the ultimate social insulator; as the Web allows us to ever more finely slice our online experience, we unwittingly cultivate a selective blindness for issues critical to the larger social matrix in which we Web dwellers are presumably embedded.

Unafraid to secure his role as information age party pooper, Shapiro goes on to imply that all this hyperlinked freedom of choice may be the ultimate straitjacket. Web dwellers, confronting a data smog of countless options and diminishing time (another unanticipated side effect of the wired life), might ultimately return to the same old aggregators though this time it'll be MSN.com. When Microsoft asks, "Where would you like to go today?" the answer may well be, "Oh, you tell me I don't have the time (or the bandwidth) to decide." It would be the ultimate cyber irony, a more cunning kind of subjugation that preserves the illusion of freedom and control.

Edited version of a slightly longer article by Thomas Scoville first published in Salon 9 November 1999.

GRACE VAUGHAN AWARD

The Grace Vaughan Fund Committee aims to ensure that as many people as possible in relevant fields are aware of the existence of the Fund in honour of the late Mrs Grace Vaughan, teacher, social worker and parliamentarian, and the assistance it can provide to individuals working or studying in the field of social justice and human rights.

The projected sum available for use in 2001 is \$2,000. This sum may be awarded to one individual or divided between two or more individuals at the discretion of the Grace Vaughan Fund Committee.

Applicants should write to
The Registrar (Attention: Ms K Lawry)
The University of Western Australia
Nedlands WA 6907

Applicants to provide full details of the sum sought, the purpose for which it is intended, and the names and addresses of two referees who will forward reports to the Registrar in accordance with appropriate regulations. Applications must include an application cover sheet, available from the Administrative Officer.

The deadline for receipt of applications is 1 September 2000.
Further information, if required should be sought from

Ms Kathryn Lawry
Administrative Officer (Arts) on 9380 2096
Kathryn.Lawry@uwa.edu.au
<http://www.arts.uwa.edu.au/gracevaughan/>

STATE CONFERENCE Perth/Bunbury 7 – 9 September 2000

Send your registrations in now.

Speakers/panels/sessions and workshops.
Take your pick places still available for all sessions. Enjoy yourself at dinners in Perth and Bunbury

Contact Marian Maughan for further information. Tel: 9330 2585, Fax: 9317 3891
Email: mmaughan@telstra.easymail.com.au

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