

# MANITOBA OMBUDSNEWS

Ombudsman, Access and Privacy Newsletter

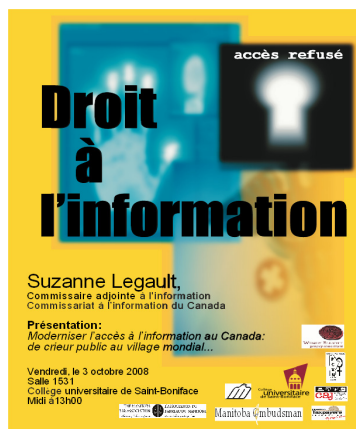


## KNOWING MORE ABOUT YOUR RIGHT TO KNOW

Celebrate Right to Know Week 2008 (see "Upcoming Events" at the end of this newsletter for venues and times).

**Monday, September 29** - Alasdair Roberts, Professor of Law and Public Policy, Suffolk University, Boston, will speak on his book, *Blacked Out: Government Secrecy in the Information Age*. A Canadian, Professor Roberts comments on problems of governance, law and public policy and has won several book and journal awards.

**Wednesday, October 1** - Media personalities, other experienced access to information seekers and access to information professionals will share their experiences and address your questions at this "Know Your Right to Know Event."



**Friday, October 3** - Suzanne Legault, Assistant Information Commissioner of Canada will speak, on "Moderniser l'accès à l'information au Canada: de crieur public au village mondial..." Ms Legault presents from long experience in the federal public service, a background as a lawyer and with commitment to open, transparent government.

### For More on Right to Know:

- see our "Upcoming Events" page at the end of this newsletter
- visit our web site, [www.ombudsman.mb.ca](http://www.ombudsman.mb.ca) (Access and Privacy Home Page, then click left hand button, "Right to Know"); visit the national web portal, [www.righttoknow.mb.ca](http://www.righttoknow.mb.ca)

## MANITOBA OMBUDSMAN HOSTS A CORRECTIONAL INVESTIGATORS CONFERENCE

In September, the Manitoba Ombudsman and the Forum of Canadian Ombudsman (FCO) co-hosted the conference, "The Specialist Ombudsman: Working Behind Prison Walls". Over 30 ombudsman staff and senior department officials from across Canada came to Winnipeg to share their expertise in the area of Corrections.

The conference included interactive sessions which explored issues affecting the marginalized of our

society; the delivery of mental health services; the use of tasers in correctional centres; and best business practices.

We were pleased to have the Honourable Serge LeClerc (MLA, Province of Saskatchewan) as the keynote speaker. He shared his life story of abuse, drug addiction and violence that led to 21 years in some of Canada's toughest prisons. Mr. LeClerc was awarded a Canadian National Pardon in 2000.

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## ARE YOU REGISTERED YET FOR THE PRAIRIE HEALTH INFORMATION PRIVACY DAY AND WORKSHOPS, OCTOBER 21 AND 22?

On October 21, 2008, attend the second Prairie Health Information Privacy Day with the knowledge that Canadian Press declared the first event, held in Regina in 2007, "a groundbreaking meeting on privacy."

Again, Prairie Health Information Privacy Day is being organized and co-hosted by Manitoba Ombudsman and the Offices of the Information and Privacy Commissioners of Alberta and Saskatchewan. This event is relevant to health professionals and employees and officers of the Manitoba government, municipal governments, RHAs, school divisions, universities and colleges.

Be assured that the associated October 21st conference workshops are especially relevant to you if you are an access and privacy officer or coordinator. Two successive half-day sessions will be, "A Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) Primer" and "Advanced PIAs...When the Answers are Not So Clear."

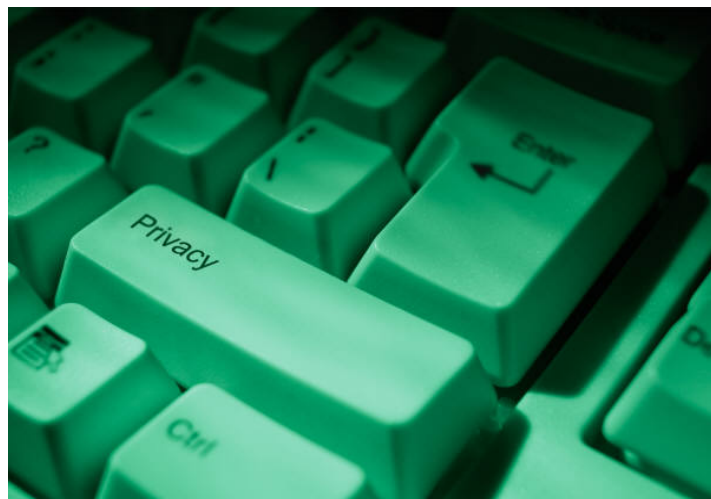
Consider, among the many experts presenting at the October 22<sup>nd</sup> conference, these Manitoba speakers:

- Landis Esposito, Winnipeg RHA
- Ombudsman Irene Hamilton
- Donna Kimpinski, Brandon RHA
- Dr. Patricia Martens, Manitoba Centre for Health Policy

- Heather McLaren, Manitoba Health
- Gail Mildren, Manitoba Justice
- Gail Perry, Manitoba Ombudsman
- Dr. Paul Thomas, University of Manitoba
- Vivian Salmon, Burntwood RHA

The Honourable Kerri Irvin-Ross, Minister of Health and Minister of Healthy Living will be providing welcoming remarks to the conference delegates.

For more information, including registration details, see: [www.verney.ca/phipd2008](http://www.verney.ca/phipd2008)



## NEW, UP-TO-DATE INQUEST REPORTING PROCEDURE

Following an inquest, the judge may recommend changes in the programs, policies and practices of government where, in his or her opinion, such changes would reduce the likelihood of a death in similar circumstances.

The role of the Ombudsman has been to follow up with the provincial government department, agency, board, commission or municipality to which inquest recommendations were directed.



The Ombudsman contacts the relevant public sector bodies involved to determine what action is being taken. After a satisfactory response has been received from each of the public sector bodies involved, a letter is

sent to the Chief Judge of the Provincial Court, advising him of the responses to each of the recommendations made in the inquest report. The inquest reports are published on the Manitoba Courts web site.

Most recently, to provide greater transparency, the Chief Judge has agreed that our letters to him, reporting on the responses of the public sector bodies to the recommendations contained in inquest reports, may be published on the Ombudsman web site.



## SHARING WITH MUNICIPALITIES AROUND MANITOBA

The public should feel confident that decisions made by government bodies will be fair and reasonable. But how can the public measure the fairness and reasonableness of an administrative decision? And what guidelines are available to government administrators to test their decisions for fairness?

Our mandate under *The Ombudsman Act*, to promote fair administration, includes reviewing the administrative practices of municipal governments. Our office is a resource for municipalities working at improving fair administrative practices that will stand up to public scrutiny.

In June 2008, our office accepted invitations to attend the Association of Manitoba Municipalities' annual meetings in the north, south and central districts across the province.

In September, we embarked on a seven-community tour to Glenella, Minnedosa, Powerview-Pine Falls, Roblin, St. Malo, Somerset and Virden to address members of the Manitoba Municipal Administrators Association.

In October, Ombudsman Irene Hamilton and a team of colleagues will be meeting with the public and public sector bodies, including municipal governments and planning districts, in central Manitoba and the Pembina Valley. Among the topics will be our resources for administrative accountability.

Our office is encouraged by the interest of these Manitoba organizations, governments and communities in promoting fair administrative practices and learning more about Manitoba Ombudsman.



### *Did You know...*

*Our Brandon office will be moving on October 1, 2008... same building, different floor  
The new address is 202-1011 Rosser Ave. Brandon, MB R7A 0L5*

## INQUIRING INTO WHAT WORKS

This fall, our office and a Faculty of Social Work Masters student are embarking on a journey of "appreciative inquiry" into the child welfare system.

Appreciative Inquiry is a process which focuses on identified successes. First you identify what is working in an organization. Once you have done this you can understand what makes those successes possible. You use those successes as a model to discover what can be done to improve a system. Then you design a strategy for positive growth.



The process of inquiry will be taking place over the next few months with youth involved with the child welfare system. The project will use the actual experiences and words of youth from within the foster care system to provide information on what is working, why it is working and how.

We will be reporting on this project in our 2008/09 progress report on *Strengthen the Commitment: An External Review of the Child Welfare System*.

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**UPCOMING EVENTS**

- September 29, 2008** – Free public Right to Know presentation, Professor Alasdair Roberts, “Blacked Out: Government Secrecy in the Information Age”, University of Winnipeg, Eckardt-Gramatte Hall, 3:30 – 4:30 p.m.  
*no registration necessary*
- October 1, 2008** – Free public Right to Know information event, “Know Your Right to Know”, Portage Place, Edmonton Court, 12:00 noon – 1:00 p.m.  
*no registration necessary*
- October 3, 2008** – Free public Right to Know presentation, Canada’s Assistant Information Commissioner, Suzanne Legault, “Moderniser l’accès à l’information au Canada: de crieur public au village mondial...”, Collège universitaire de Saint-Boniface, Room 1531  
*no registration necessary*
- October 15, 2008** – Brown Bag Talk, “Responding to the Ombudsman’s Recommendations under FIPPA and PHIA”,  
*for Access and Privacy officers and coordinators – To register, call (204) 982-9139*
- October 21, 2008** – Workshops associated with Prairie Health Information Privacy Day, Delta Winnipeg, 350 St. Mary Avenue  
*for Access and Privacy officers and coordinators*
- October 22, 2008** – Prairie Health Information Privacy Day, Delta Winnipeg, 350 St. Mary Avenue  
*for Access and Privacy officers and coordinators, all health professionals and health organizations, staff of provincial and municipal government, school divisions, universities*  
*For more information and registration on Prairie Health Information Privacy events, <http://www.verney.ca/phipd2008>*
- November 19, 2008** – Brown Bag Talk, “Amendments to FIPPA and PHIA”,  
*for Access and Privacy officers and coordinators – To register, call (204) 982-9139*

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