



A timely new publication by the Manitoba League of Persons with Disabilities

Council Update

Season's Greetings from the Provincial Council. Since our last bulletin we have been hard at work advancing the disability agenda in Manitoba. Greyhound Bus Lines has once again agreed not to terminate passenger bus service in Manitoba. Company officials said that they will continue working with the province and federal government towards finding a long-term solution to the problem. Another issue, in which the MLPD has been involved, has been around Bill C-384, an Act to amend the Criminal Code (Right to Die with Dignity). We oppose assisted suicide and euthanasia because of the adverse impact it would have on persons with disabilities. People with disabilities would bear the negative social consequences of any legislation that allows for the killing of people perceived to be suffering. It looks as though we will have enough votes to kill the proposed legislation when it comes up for a vote on November 25, 2009. The MLPD continues to have a part in the discussions around whether or not we need a Manitobans with Disabilities Act. Provincial Council has decided not to take a position "for or against" any proposed legislation, however if any individual MLPD member chooses to support Barrier-Free Manitoba's efforts that would be okay with the leadership of the MLPD.

Consultations around the provinces recently released Opening Doors: Manitoba's Commitment to Persons with Disabilities discussion paper, are currently under way in rural Manitoba. The Winnipeg consultations are scheduled for December 3, 2009. Submissions to the province can also be made online.

Members Sought for Participation in Sinclair Inquest

No doubt, many of you have heard or read about the case of Brian Sinclair, the 34 year old disabled man who sat in a hospital waiting room for 34 hours waiting for treatment for a bladder infection and died there without receiving the attention he needed. Following this, the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority subsequently implemented procedures to ensure that people seeking treatment in hospital emergency rooms are seen and their needs addressed in a timely manner. An inquest has been called into Mr. Sinclair's death and it will begin on January 11 and last for at least three months.

Although the MLPD was unable to obtain formal intervention status at the inquest due to insufficient financial resources and the difficulties in obtaining pro bono legal representation, we plan to make ourselves visible at the inquest by attending the hearings and to speak with

the media where opportunities present themselves.

We are looking for MLPD members who would be available to attend the inquest, so that we have presence there for at least part of the time. Individuals should feel comfortable speaking with the media.

Please contact Colleen Watters at 488-0466 or wattersc@mts.net if you would like to participate in this important activity.

Transportation Committee Update

Meeting Scheduled

The Transportation Committee is planning a meeting for December 8, 2009 at 6:00 PM in the MLPD boardroom, 105 - 500 Portage Avenue. We will be welcoming representatives from CPA and other groups to discuss issues related to Handi-Transit. Members interested in transportation are also encouraged to come out to this meeting.

HandiTransit Pick-up and Drop-off at Portage Place

Thanks to Marie-Lynn Hamilton at the ILRC for her soon to be successful advocacy work to get Handi-Transit service in the back of the building again. December 3, 2009 is the target date for resolution. Thanks also goes out to Toby Chase, Manager, Corporate Affairs for the Forks North Portage Partnership Corporation. He is acted quickly to a letter from MLPD. His interaction with Mary-Lynn and Portage Place management is facilitating the resolution by December 3, 2009.

New Coma research calls “vegetative state” into question

The Globe and Mail reports 24 November 09 that new tests on persons who have fallen into coma may demonstrate that some are in a higher state of awareness than previously thought possible given existing tests.

A man named Rom Houben struggled for 23 years to be heard but due to the lack of responsiveness of his body, no one could hear his screams. Thought to be unresponsive to external stimuli, Mr. Houben was instead aware of the death of his father, of visitors and of touch.

The PET scan used in testing Mr. Houben was not available in 1983, when he first had his accident, and had not been used in this manner until three years ago. Mr. Houben is now able to communicate through assistive technology.

We are trying to use e-mail as much as possible to send updates on MLPD activities. If you have e-mail, please send your e-mail address to Josie at MLPD@shawcable.com

The 2009/2010 MLPD Provincial Council:

Harry Wolbert (Co-chair), Terry McIntosh Co-chair), Dean Richert (1st Vice-Chair), Colleen Watters (2nd Vice Chair), Clare Simpson (Treasurer), Ross Eadie (Secretary), Paula Keirstead, Theresa Swedick, Ted Roots (Souris Branch)