

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

**October 2002**

Issues in our profession never cease, no matter what the season! Your Provincial Executive members were busy throughout the summer months addressing criminal justice issues, organizing fellowship activities and professional development events.

Our first annual PO week, commenced in honour of POAO's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, was a success. Thanks to Lori Santamaria for her tremendous effort in organizing this event. It was a significant planning challenge given that PO Week occurred quite soon after the Ontario civil service strike. I was very impressed with our colleagues around the Province who acknowledged this event. During the Toronto food drive, POs competed against each other and donated **1,066 pounds** of food to the Daily Bread Food Bank! On the last day of PO week, many of us volunteered there to sort, label, and package the food. Great team spirit was demonstrated. Our gratitude goes to Brenda Futz for helping to arrange this food bank day.

I recently participated in two meetings regarding OTIS issues. Despite our repeated requests, and constructive suggestions, it is obvious that OTIS case management is not going away. This fragmented system which was clearly not designed for our purposes, will remain as the case management system for P&P. However, the Ministry has recently taken some steps to address the significant time loss and frustration that OTIS has caused. The return of trainers to the field to identify "shortcuts", and to assist in defining the nature of OTIS problems, has been helpful. As I indicated to the Ministry, this initiative should have occurred much earlier. Some technological improvements to OTIS will be coming in the near future, and there is a positive resolution to the assessment issue.

Workload continues to be a priority, despite the hiring of the 165 PPOs. The domino effect of this hiring still has not ceased, but even where new Officers are in place, the workload pressures continue. As you saw in previous correspondence, we have requested to establish a workload index in conjunction with the Ministry. This concept is being considered corporately and we will be included. Members will be provided with a discussion paper on this subject at the AGM. In the interim, feel free to contact Lori Santamaria, Barry McCann or me, regarding this critical issue.

YCJA is approaching quickly. Whether or not you like this legislation, it is almost here! Our concerns regarding the implementation of this Act have not diminished. We are continuing to work with the Ministry and other justice partners regarding YCJA. Certain pilot projects still in existence only further emphasize how justice system integrity can be compromised without appropriate implementation.

Also in the YO field, integration of Phase I and II continues. Ministry meetings will occur in the near future, where our perspective on this initiative will be provided. Further amalgamation discussion will occur at the AGM. Darlene Humeniuk continues to lead this project and a paper will be available for members' perusal and feedback.

I have received comments from many members regarding the new PO3 classification. We certainly want this new position to benefit our profession, and we will be consulting with the Ministries in that regard. A survey of members' opinions regarding the PO3 position is forthcoming.

Your Association continues to work with other organizations regarding common goals, and to educate our justice partners regarding the integral role we play. Now, more than ever, membership and fellowship are essential. Even when you think there could be no more change – there will be! We need to continue to work together, to ensure that our profession is not detrimentally impacted by these initiatives.

Symposium 2002 is here. The program is excellent in both appearance and content. Congratulations to Gino, Susan, and all on the Planning Committee. Our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration in London will be beneficial for all delegates. We definitely need a few days of training, and morale-boosting, after such a stressful year.

See you in London where we will celebrate our accomplishments, our profession, and our perseverance!

Until then,

Cathy Hutchison  
President