

President's Report:

It has been a very busy and productive first few months for POAO! Foremost, I am excited to announce POAO has been invited to speak at the Canadian Domestic Violence Conference being held in Toronto, Ontario June 18 and 19, 2009. The presentation, entitled: **“Lessons Learned and New Directions: Probation Officers in partnership with Victims in the Criminal Process”**, will speak to POAO's 2006 Research Project Research Project: *Victims in the Criminal Process: Increasing the Effectiveness of Community-Based Sanctions and Promoting the Interests of Victim* and how POAO is working in collaboration with Ministry and community partners in realizing some of the recommendations of the research project. This is another opportunity to further promote our Association and the quality work we do as Probation Officers and Probation and Parole Officers. POAO will be collaborating with the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services (MCSCS) for this opportunity and the MCSCS Domestic Violence Lead will be presenting with POAO. Our Policy Directors are working diligently to identify future research opportunities for POAO and it is our hope to apply for another research grant in the near future.

The Executive Board has been working to create a Strategic Plan for the Association as a means to give some structure and direction to the growth of POAO, to help support our strategic goals and to identify how the Association is going to meet these goals. A working draft of the Strategic Plan will soon be distributed to members for their feedback and comments before finalizing the plan. I would encourage any member to contact me with any suggestions or comments in regards to Association and endeavours we are working on.

The Victim's pamphlet, part of the recommendations of the research project, is moving towards the piloting stage and is in the final approval process through MCSCS. The pamphlet is going to be initially available in English and French with the goal of translating the document into other languages as needs are identified. The pilot will be seeking feedback from Crown Attorneys, Victim/Witness personnel and victims to help make the document a more reliable and useful tool for individuals. Once this feedback is incorporated the final product will be ready for distribution across the province. I would like to thank our Vice-President, Kimberley Ridgers for her extensive dedication to this project and for her tireless work on the pamphlet!

POAO is pleased to announce May 3 to May 9, 2009 as Probation Officer's Week in Ontario. This year POAO is supporting the theme of **“Probation Officers of Ontario: Protecting the Community and Supporting Professionalism”**. There are many activities planned by your six Branches for PO-week and I would encourage everyone to take time to enjoy some wonderful spring weather and the various PO-week activities planned within your areas.

This year Central Branch is hosting SYMPOSIUM 2009. The 55th Annual POAO Symposium is being held in the GTA from November 1st – 4th, with a theme of: **“Serving Communities, Supporting You, Empowering our Profession.”** The theme is designed to highlight the professionalism and dedication of PPOs/POS to their communities. Kimberley Ridgers is your Symposium Chair for 2009 and I can attest she and the Planning Committee have been working diligently to create a wonderful event for members. This is the first year a “Call for Presenters” has been posted on our website in respect to Symposium 2009 and I am informed applications as far wide as Florida, USA have applied to be considered presenters at Symposium!

As your President I have been working with both the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services to secure funding for POAO members to attend Symposium. To date there is no funding commitment from either Ministry and the respective Assistant Deputy Ministers have indicated due to the current financial recession Ministry funding allotments are being examined. We truly hope MCSCS and MCYS will acknowledge and recognize the importance of Symposium as a training and educational venue for staff through their provision of funding for members to attend. As well, that MCSCS and MCYS will invest in their staff through supporting professional development. I will continue to communicate with the ADMs regarding this pivotal issue and will keep the membership apprised.

I would like to recognize the hard work and dedication of Mark Stehlin as our outgoing Monitor Editor. Mark has worked tirelessly for numerous years as the Monitor Editor and has spearheaded many innovations in relation to our quarterly publication. Our policy directors Patricia Giroux and Karen Restoule will be taking over the duties as Monitor Editor and I thank Mark for his mentoring of them and his continued support of POAO as part of the 2009 Symposium Planning Committee!

I would like to wish members an enjoyable and safe spring and hopefully will get a chance to touch base during the various PO-week activities!

Sincerely,

Erin Olesen-Schinke
President POAO