

MANITOBA OMBUDSNEWS



Ombudsman, Access and Privacy Newsletter

MARK YOUR SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER DATES FOR YOUR RIGHT TO KNOW!

For the third consecutive year, Manitoba Ombudsman is involved in organizing events to celebrate International Right to Know Day (September 28) and National Right to Know Week (September 29 - October 3).

On Monday, September 29, Professor Alasdair Roberts, who has written extensively and lectured internationally on comparative access to information regimes and results, will present, "Blacked Out: Government Secrecy in the Information Age." His speech will be at the University of Winnipeg's Eckhardt-Gramatte Hall, from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.

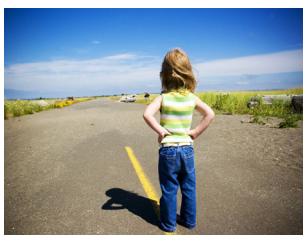
On Wednesday, October 1, "Know Your Right to Know," an information event, will take place at Portage Place, Edmonton Court, from 12:00 noon to 1:00 p.m. Come share in the knowledge. It's your right to know!

On Friday, October 3, Canada's Assistant Information Commissioner, Suzanne Legault, will present, in French, at St. Boniface College, room 1531, on the topic, "Moderniser l'accès à l'information au Canada: de crieur public au village mondial..." Ms Legault's speech will be from 12:00 noon to 1:00 p.m. Joignez-vous!



More information will be posted: on the Ombudsman's web site, www.ombudsman.mb.ca (go to Access and Privacy Home Page, click on the left hand button, "Right to Know") and on the national web portal, www.righttoknow.ca.

CHILD WELFARE: REPORTING ON THE PROGRESS OF IMPLEMENTING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT



In 2006, we issued our report, *Strengthen the Commitment: An External Review of the*

Child Welfare System. It contained recommendations to improve the administration of child welfare in Manitoba. All the recommendations were accepted. The Minister of Family Services and Housing announced that follow-up report cards would be done by the Ombudsman.

On July 16, 2008, our first progress report was released. We found that many of the changes that had been implemented have not been in place for a sufficient time to determine if they have had a measurable impact at the front lines of service. There were also basic issues identified in the 2006 report that have not yet been resolved.

For more details, this report is on line at: www.ombudsman.mb.ca (under "Ombudsman Division", "Reports and Publications").

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BRINGING PUBLIC SCRUTINY

On July 24, 2008, the Ombudsman released her Annual Report for the 2007 calendar year. Some highlights were:

Under The Ombudsman Act:

In 2007, investigations by the Ombudsman identified cases where concerns about the incarceration of inmates living with mental illnesses or mental disabilities continue to exist. The Ombudsman has taken the position that resolution of issues affecting high risk, high needs inmates, requires the collaboration of the Departments of Health; Family Services and Housing; and Justice.

Under The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act:

In five access to information cases, the length of time the applicant waited for a response from Conservation was so wrong and unfair that the Ombudsman recommended the Department refund to the applicant the search and preparation fee of \$840. The Department refunded the fees.



Under The Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblower Protection) Act

This was the first reporting year for the Ombudsman on her mandate under this legislation, which became law on April 2, 2007. Her duties include the handling of requests from government organizations to be exempted from the requirement of having a designated officer to deal with disclosures of wrongdoing under the Act. The Ombudsman denied 60 such requests and approved 39 on the basis that these were smaller bodies for which it would not be practical to have a designated officer. Another duty of the Ombudsman under the Act is to receive disclosures of wrongdoing. Three disclosures were received in 2007. One was investigated under the Whistleblower legislation and two were more appropriately investigated under *The Ombudsman Act*.

DIARIZE AND PRIORITIZE OCTOBER 21& 22, PRAIRIE HEALTH INFORMATION PRIVACY DAY AND WORKSHOPS IN WINNIPEG

Manitoba Ombudsman, together with the Offices of the Information and Privacy Commissioners of Alberta and Saskatchewan, will host the second Prairie Health Information Privacy Day conference, October 22, 2008, in Winnipeg. On October 21st, workshops will be offered, including "Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) Primer" and "Advanced PIAs...When the Answers are Not So Clear".

These events are directly relevant to health professionals and all employees and officers of the Manitoba government, municipal governments, RHAs, school divisions, universities and

colleges. If you handle personal health information in your job, this is for you.

The focus will be on demystifying present and future health privacy challenges.



Plenary and breakout sessions will be organized under three themes:

- coming to terms with the law
- maintaining successful operations
- unraveling other mysteries

All events take place at the Delta Winnipeg, 350 St. Mary Avenue. For more information, see: www.verney.ca/phipd2008 or contact our office at 982-9130 (Winnipeg) or 1-800-665-0531 (toll free).



MORE STUDENTS AND TEACHERS JOIN THE HERD

We are looking forward to even more classroom invitations with the implementation, this September, of new Grade 6 and 9 Social Studies curricula, which include the Manitoba Ombudsman.

Our January 2007 publication, *Joining the Herd: A Handbook on Participating in Manitoba's Government*, sets out applicable skills and specific learning outcomes on democratic participation for Grades 6 and 9 and includes topics and focusing questions for Grade 11 Social Studies, where Canada and Canadian Government are also taught. *Joining the Herd* invites teachers to invite Manitoba Ombudsman to their classrooms.



And they did in May and June, 2008:

- Carman Elementary School
- Gillis Elementary School, Tyndall
- Neelin High School, Brandon
- R.D. Parker Collegiate, Thompson (in March)
- Ste. Anne Collegiate
- Strathclair Community School
- Daniel MacIntyre Collegiate Institute, Winnipeg
- Gordon Bell High School, Winnipeg
- Gray Academy, Winnipeg
- Stanley Knowles School, Winnipeg

Thanks to the students and teachers of these schools for your enthusiasm and hospitality.

Ombudsman Activities Now Underway...

The Forum of Canadian Ombudsman Conference for Ombudsman, their staff and individuals who work in the field of corrections will be held September 14-16 in Winnipeg.

Manitoba Ombudsman is now organizing our October 2008 fall tour with presentations to citizens and public sector bodies in Altona, Morden, Portage la Prairie, Steinbach and Winkler.

SAFETY TIPS FOR YOUTH ON THE INTERNET

This summer, with the assistance of a Masters of Public Administration student from the joint University of Manitoba and Winnipeg program, our office has been augmenting our presentation materials for Ombudsman school visits. This has included consideration of young people's online safety.

Online activities are traceable and may put the user at risk. Here are ten internet tips for youth:

1. Guard your personal information
2. Protect your friends' personal information
3. Be selective with pictures you post
4. Don't post specific plans or activities online
5. Safeguard your password
6. Talk to your parents/guardians before purchasing anything online
7. Only add people you know "in person" as a friend when social networking
8. Be wary of people you meet on the internet
9. Never have direct contact with a person you have only met on the internet, unless a parent/guardian or trusted adult is present
10. Talk to your family, teachers and friends about internet-related risks





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UPCOMING EVENTS

- **September 17, 2008** – Brown Bag Talk, “Providing Representations about Decisions to Refuse Access”, *for Access and Privacy officers and coordinators*
- **October 15, 2008** – Brown Bag Talk, “Responding to the Ombudsman’s Recommendations under FIPPA and PHIA”, *for Access and Privacy officers and coordinators*
For details or to register for both of the above events, call (204) 982-9139
- **September 29, 2008** – Free public Right to Know presentation, Professor Alasdair Roberts, “Blacked Out: Government Secrecy in the Information Age”, University of Winnipeg, Eckhardt-Gramatte Hall, 3:30 – 4:30 p.m.
- **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.
- **October 3, 2008** – Free public Right to Know presentation (in French), Canada’s Assistant Information Commissioner, Suzanne Legault, “Moderniser l’accès à l’information au Canada: de crier public au village mondial...” St. Boniface College, Room 1531, 12:00 noon – 1:00 p.m.
- **October 21, 2008** – Workshops associated with Prairie Health Information Privacy Day, Delta Winnipeg, 350 St. Mary Avenue, *for Access and Privacy officers and coordinators and others listed in the next item*
- **October 22, 2008** – Prairie Health Information Privacy Day, Delta Winnipeg, 350 St. Mary Ave. *for Access and Privacy officers and coordinators, health professionals and health organizations, all staff of provincial and municipal government, school divisions, universities and the interested public*
For more information and registration details about Prairie Health Information Privacy events,
<http://www.verney.ca/hiphd2008>

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