

Connecting MBC, Chapters, Volunteers and Members...

Report from National...

Kim Weatherall, CHAIR OF MBC
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Looking back over the last few months in preparation for writing this article, I am amazed at just what can happen within an organization through the dedication of a handful of volunteers. While it is impossible to capture everything that the Board has been involved in, the following will provide a snapshot of some of the most important aspects of the work completed since the last Report From National with some further details throughout Multiple Moments and Report From National in other articles.

For the months of May to August, the MBC Board Members have assisted in the celebration and promotion of Canada's National Multiple Births Awareness Day, concluded the process to determine a new membership fee structure that would encourage non-member groups to join or rejoin MBC (including sending a letter to announce the new fees in early September), prepared for and attended the 2007 Conference and AGM in Kitchener, and finalized the Annual Report (including the Year 1 review of the MBC Strategic Plan and the 2006-2007 Financial Report). Plans for the 2008 AGM, Conference and 30th Anniversary celebrations have begun, promising to be a lot of extra hands-on work for the Board and the Business Services Manager over the next year and a half.

There have been a number of ongoing activities such as replying to requests of volunteers, members and media; planning, attending and preparing minutes for the AGM and other online Board meetings; monitoring ongoing projects; and welcoming new volunteers at the national level.

Personally, May and June seem like a blur! Starting weeks prior to the Conference until the middle of June was very MBC/multiple birth focused with the preparation for and attendance at the AGM and Conference in Kitchener, and then the quick trip home to Ottawa for one day before leaving with my daughters and Gail to travel to Belgium for the International Congress on Twins Studies (ICTS), returning home June 15th after a brief vacation in Europe after the Congress.

As you will read in our enclosed report, Canada will play a lead role on the international multiple-births scene. I am looking forward to the next three years and what MBC can bring to the international multiple-birth community, and what we will learn from working with the leaders of other multiple-birth organizations and people with an interest in multiple birth issues worldwide. Gail and I share more about the Congress and the Council of Multiple Births Organizations (COMBO) in other pieces in this Report From National; however I would like to take the opportunity to thank MBC for supporting my attendance as I think that it was, and will be, extremely useful to MBC, its Chapters and its members to have Canadian representation at COMBO meetings, and to network with other members of both COMBO and ISTS in between the Congresses held every three years. In addition, I cannot say enough

about the generosity of the small, but incredible Temiskaming Chapter for supporting Gail financially, allowing her to also attend. It was money well invested!

While I write the final draft of this article, we are fast approaching the middle of September which means the inevitable finish to summer. It also brings (at least for me) a sense of structure and the excitement of activities starting up once again. What this means in the multiple-birth community is that across Canada chapter executives will come together, relaxed, rejuvenated, and ready to support families in their communities. Likewise, the national volunteers and Board, while not completely relaxing over the past couple of months, have enjoyed some downtime and are now ready to push forward on your behalf. We are excited about the new volunteers joining the team and we are very excited to announce that while we have found a new Financial Director in Melanie Dugard, Jennifer Dawson has agreed to remain on the Board as a Director at Large.

Remember to stay in touch and let us know what your chapter is up to, share your accomplishments and ask for our assistance! We wish you and your members the very best!

Working at the 2007 Conference



Kim & Gail – last minute editing



Office Manager never sleeps!



Nicole working in her pj's

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International Congress on Twin Studies (ICTS) and Council of Multiple Births Organization (COMBO) Update

Kimberley Weatherall, Chair, & Gail Moore, Vice-Chair, Multiple Births Canada

We were honoured to represent Multiple Births Canada at the International Congress on Twin Studies (ICTS) in Ghent, Belgium in June. As members of the International Society for Twin Studies (ISTS), scientists, doctors, professionals and members of multiple-birth organizations from 23 countries attended.

The Congress is designed much like MBC's National Conferences with full group sessions and workshop streams including daily sessions with COMBO. The COMBO sessions included presentations from Switzerland, Germany, United Kingdom, Australia, United States, Finland, and Sweden. Gail Moore provided Canada's contribution with a well-received presentation on National Multiple Births Awareness Day resulting in an agreement to pursue an International Multiple Births Awareness Week.

This conference was a great opportunity for us to network and share best practices with other national organizations during the scheduled sharing sessions and on an informal basis. It soon became evident that for the most part, national organizations offer similar services, face many of the same challenges, and deal with similar issues faced by their memberships. It was agreed that COMBO members should work more closely to share ideas, solutions, resources, and opportunities in order to strengthen the support multiple-birth families receive and to minimize duplication of effort. National groups will, through the help of COMBO, pool our knowledge and experiences in many areas.

While MBC is regarded highly by our counterparts for our work in many different areas, especially with the limited resources available to us in comparison to other national organizations, we fall short in researching issues affecting Canadian multiple-birth families. Many national organizations place a heavier emphasis on research, polling their members on topics such as

relationships, school issues and extra-curricular activities. COMBO members agreed to share the results of such polling efforts, but more importantly, to share their surveys so that other countries can complete the same research. This will allow for a greater comparison between countries.

One area where MBC is strong is in our relationships with the professional community and in our ability to address many of the medical and educational needs facing our membership with the help and counsel of our Advisory Board and other generous professionals. Present at this Congress from our Advisory Board were Louis Keith, Jean Kollanti, Pat Preedy and Jane Denton (newly appointed MBC Advisory Board member and recent Guest Speaker at the 2007 MBC Conference), as well as others whom we have worked with over the years such as Elizabeth Bryan, Nancy Segal and Beth Pector (all of whom have been guest speakers at MBC National Conferences).

During the Congress, the Board of COMBO was voted in for the 2007-2010 term and consists of the following members: Kim Weatherall, Chair (Canada), Gail Moore, Co-Vice Chair (Canada), Carol Robins, Co-Vice Chair (UK), Dr. Christine Disselkamp, Research (Germany) and Mary Adcock, Past Chair (US). In addition to the role of COMBO Chair, Kim will represent COMBO with a seat on the Board for the International Society for Twin Studies (ISTS) joining the world's top researchers and scientists and Gail will play a lead role in developing an International Multiple Births Awareness Week! Other areas that COMBO Board members and volunteers will be looking at include (but are not limited to): the development of an on-line forum for its members, celebrating its 30th year anniversary in 2010, educational needs and getting the word out to pre-service teachers, COMBO funding opportunities, prevention of multiple-birth loss and a policy on assisted reproductive technology.

For more information about COMBO, please visit <http://web.mac.com/madcock313/iWeb/Site/Welcome.html>, and stay tuned for further information on ISTS, COMBO and the Congress in Multiple Moments and on MBC's website.



Thank You KW-POMBA!

The Board of Directors, on behalf of the 2007 MBC National Conference delegates and MBC, would like to take this opportunity to thank K-W POMBA and its Conference Committee for hosting a spectacular, educational, motivational, and inspirational weekend! The three-day event, Focus on Families, held at the Kitchener Delta, provided many opportunities to learn, network, recharge, and relax. Thank you (and your families) for giving so much time over the past two years to ensure that this year's delegates had a positive and memorable experience. Your dedication and commitment to making the 2007 AGM and Conference was very much appreciated by all those in attendance.



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Report from National...

Vicki Riley, BUSINESS SERVICES MANAGER

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What a summer that was! I like it hot, but... My 12-and-a-half-year-old boys found a wonderful way to stay cool with their friends this summer. They discovered a fun fishing spot on the Nottawasaga River that feeds into Georgian Bay here in Wasaga Beach. They would pack a lunch and some water bottles, dig up a few dozen worms and head down to the river for the day. These Huckleberry Finn adventures even included a willow tree that hung over the river where they would jump into the cool water below. Ah, to be a kid again.

The 2007 Conference in Kitchener seems so long ago now, but I cannot miss the opportunity to say thank you to the Conference Planning Committee—and especially Melody—for all their hard work before and during the conference. I understand how draining this type of event can be and how supportive your families must have been during the past couple of years. I personally send to you all huge hugs and thanks—it was a wonderfully organized and informative event. Next year you can relax and enjoy the MBC 30th anniversary conference in October of 2008.

It was especially exciting to be able to meet, in person, a couple of volunteers that I have been working with for years but have only spoken to over the phone or via email. It was a pleasure to meet both Alison Pilz, MM's Layout Editor, and Meredith Fraser-Ohman, MM's Editor-in-Chief. I am so very pleased to have met you and I am honoured to work with you both.

The Business Office was slow during the summer months, as usual. Here is a quick review of some of the Business Office statistics from the last few months:

On our toll-free line, the Business Office received 32 incoming calls in April, 40 in May and 28 calls in June.

May referrals to local chapters and non-member groups: 1 referral to a member chapter (1 Brampton) and 8 referrals to non-member groups (1 Toronto, 2 Burlington/Hamilton, 2 Mississauga, 1 Manitoba, 1 Montreal, 1 Quebec City).

June: 1 referral to a member chapter (1 Brampton) and 4 referrals to non-member groups (2 Montreal, 1 Toronto, 1 Mississauga).

July: 3 referrals to member chapters (1 Sarnia/Lambton, 1 Kitchener/Waterloo, 1 Edmonton) and 4 referrals to non-member groups (1 PoCoMo [BC], 1 Ottawa, 2 Toronto).

The MBC office refers through telephone conversations, email and written information included with orders. We feel that the referral numbers are usually lower for our member chapters because their contact information is easily found on the MBC website under Locate a Chapter. Non-member groups are also listed on the MBC website under the Website Links page under Multiple Birth Organizations.

For up-to-date information on MBC's many publications, refer to the website. MBC members receive a 20% discount on all material and have free access to our 65+ fact sheets through the Members Only section.

Remember, for those of you in the school system or just preparing to enter it, MBC has a Multiples in School Support Kit that you may find useful. The complete list of what is included can be found on the website under Publications. Note: this kit contains two of everything so that you can leave the second copy with your school administrator/teacher. This kit sells for \$25 (\$20 for MBC members) plus \$4 shipping and handling. Order online or download the Publications Order Form and mail in your order.

Enjoy your fall and back to school—also known as “the most wonderful time of the year,” according to the TV ad.

Vicki

Gail Moore,

DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

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Seven years ago, in 2000, I attended my first National Conference in Niagara Falls, Ontario. Before that enlightening weekend, I knew very little about our national organization, other than we were about to transition from POMBA to MBC.

I remember attending the Welcome Reception, meeting the Board of Directors and recognizing that the volunteers in that room were passionate about their work for Canada's multiple-birth community. One person in particular was so obviously dedicated to the organization that I have based many of my volunteer commitments on her vision of a reunified, refocused and stronger national organization with Chapters coast-to-coast working on behalf of all multiple-birth families, present and future. That person is MBC Chair, Kim Weatherall.

Kim is a strong organizational leader. She is skilled at plotting what needs to be done and how to get there. She sets a pace that is sometimes hard to match, but I keep trying. So, what's Kim gotten us into now?

First, let me preface the answer by explaining that since our last RFN, my work as MBC's Director of Communications has been a bit overwhelming. We spent six weeks preparing for the 2007 Annual General Meeting, including producing the Annual Report and a PowerPoint presentation explaining MBC's work on Canada's National Multiple Births Awareness Day. As we finished up with late-night work bees at the 2007 National Conference in Kitchener-Waterloo, I promised the Board I would sit on Kim's hands if she tried to take on anything big in Belgium.

That didn't happen. In fact, true to form, Kim was so intent on finding ways to improve the way we share information internationally that she easily convinced me that leadership roles with COMBO (the Council of Multiple Births Organizations) would benefit MBC. During the 2007 International Congress on Twin Studies, as we sat around a Ghent University boardroom table talking with members of multiple-birth organizations from the United Kingdom, the United States, Germany, Finland and Australia (to name a few), it dawned on us that MBC could benefit from their research projects just as they could benefit from learning about MBC's Advisory Board. Putting together an international “best practices” would allow us to see what we all could do better; designing an “international multiple-births awareness week” would amplify our efforts when advocating for multiple-birth families; strengthening our “international ties” would give us new energy to deliver our programs at home.

Now the real balancing act begins. On top of continuing to assist my Chapter, Temiskaming Multiple Births, with their outreach and support work in our area... in addition to focusing my efforts of reaching 1,000 Canadian newspapers with a “Letter to the Editor” explaining this year's National Multiple Births Awareness Day theme as well as starting to plan our 2008 event... besides working with the Board to plan MBC's 30th Anniversary and National Conference in 2008... now I will also be supporting Kim in her new role as Chair of COMBO!

As Co-Vice Chair of COMBO for the next three years, I will get to spend even more time watching Kim in action. That's a good thing, because in about 15 months she wants me to step into the MBC Chair position, and I know the best way to prepare for that job is to keep learning from Kim! Now, if I could find someone to mentor for taking over my MBC Vice Chair position...

Gail

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**Kim Weatherall, MBC CHAIR/
DIRECTOR OF VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT**
volunteers@multiplebirthscanada.org

The Multiple Births Canada Board of Directors would like to welcome the following new volunteers to the national level.

Melody Parent

Melody has recently joined the Health and Education Committee and will provide a more specific interest, background and knowledge in the area of multiple births and education as both a parent of triplets and as an elementary school teacher. Melody is President of Kitchener-Waterloo POMBA, and most recently chaired the 2007 Conference Committee.

Vera Teschow

Vera joined the Health and Education Committee after attending her first MBC Conference and AGM in Kitchener in June. Vera, a mother of twins, is both a member of MBC and a member of Toronto POMBA where she recently held the position of Volunteer Coordinator. Also a school teacher, Vera will bring her knowledge and background to the Committee in the area of education. Vera currently offers her own prenatal classes for parents of multiples and has an interest in the care that multiples and families of multiples receive. Vera has had several articles published in Multiple Moments.

Jane Denton

We are pleased to announce that Jane Denton has agreed to be part of our MBC Advisory Board. Jane is the Director of the Multiple Birth Foundation in London, England and was a guest speaker at our 2007 AGM and Conference. Jane has an extensive background working in the area of IVF and multiple-births, conducts pre-natal classes through MBF and offers additional support to members of Twins and Multiple Births Association (TAMBA) of the UK when needed. We look forward to having Jane provide advice and guidance to the MBC Board.

Cheryl Wadasinghe

While the Board sadly said good-bye to Cheryl as a fellow Board member at the 2007 Conference, we are pleased to welcome her to the MBC Advisory Board in the area of government relations. We treasure the time we have had with Cheryl as she has been such an incredible source of information and guidance for MBC, especially in the area of moving forward our goals of EI provisions for multiple-birth families.

Melanie Dugard

We are excited to announce that Melanie Dugard has accepted the position of Finance Director/Treasurer. Melanie Dugard is a Senior Manager at Grant Thornton LLP in its Assurance and Business Advisory Services practice. She brings over eleven years of financial expertise to the Board through her audit experience in various industries including not-for-profit and charitable organizations. She is the mother of four-year-old twins (soon to be five), who keep her on the run between dancing, soccer and skating. Melanie is excited to be joining the Board and hopes that her experience as a mother of multiples, combined with her accounting knowledge, will be of benefit to the organization.

MBC Website Links!!

Over 200 links to multiple-birth shopping and parenting resources/website links

Celebrating Our Volunteers!

At the 2007 AGM and Conference in Kitchener, Ontario we celebrated our volunteers through the Making a Difference Awards (more information can be found in this issue of Multiple Moments), but we also celebrated several long-time service awards for the following volunteers:

- **John Withnall**, Webmaster for 5 years
- **Anne-Marie Owens**, Higher Order Multiples Newsletter Editor for 5 years
- **Francesca Bell**, Special Needs Support Network Chair for 5 years
- **Donna Launslager**, for 20 years as a volunteer with MBC (and formerly POMBA) in a variety of formal and informal positions. Donna currently leads the Health and Education Committee.

MBC congratulates and appreciates their dedication and commitment to volunteering with MBC.

Kimberley Weatherall
DIRECTOR OF VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT
CHAIR OF MULTIPLE BIRTHS CANADA
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The Board of Directors
Wish to Thank **Vicki Riley**
For **5 years of dedicated service** as our
Business Services Manager

Vicki's efficiency and dedication in seamlessly handling business for Canada's multiple-birth community are truly appreciated !

Thank you Vicki!

MBC would like to thank its Sustaining Members for their added support:

Cheryl Wadasinghe	Nepean, ON	Donna Launslager	Waterloo, ON
Bonnie Schultz	Calgary, AB	Diane Myers	Moffat, ON
Kimberley Weatherall	Orleans, ON		

Multiple Births Canada would like to thank the following individuals:

- **National MBC Volunteers** - we can never thank you enough! Thank you for your dedication and time in assisting all of the members of MBC.
- **Candi Cuppage** for her successful fundraising initiatives for MBC through various sources