



10 YEAR CHRONOLOGY

1997 - 2007

September 1993 Amy Ramsay (a constable with the Peel Regional Police at the time), accompanied by Hamilton Police officers Alison Hood and Myra James, attended the International Association of Women Police (IAWP) Conference in Vancouver, BC. Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) S/Sgt Wendy Wilson and her recruiting team had an exhibit to encourage currently serving members to consider applying to the OPP. Following this conference (which was the 2nd time Vancouver had hosted the event); Amy Ramsay networked with many officers from Ontario and learned there was interest in developing a provincial organization. She soon became a board member of the IAWP (Region 11- representing Ont. Que. N.B., N.S., P.E.I. and NFLD). Amy drafted the original constitution of the Ontario Women in Law Enforcement (OWLE) that would later be approved by the charter executive board that she selected in 1996.

The OWLE executive was inclusive of members from municipal, provincial and federal agencies. The charter executive included: Amy Ramsay, Tracey Smith (Peel), Brenda Glass (Halton), Lee-Ann Ansell (Halton), Lisa Hodgins (Toronto), Michele Paradis (RCMP), Joanne Tawton and Pauline Gray (Toronto), Val Jarvis (OPP), Monica Harris (OPP) and Myra James (Hamilton). Active membership fees were set at \$25.00

May 8, 1997 marked the date of the first official OWLE dinner meeting which promoted professional development, networking, organizational awareness and membership growth. Christie Blatchford was the guest speaker – the topic was Women Policing and Professionalism. The event was attended by 126 and reinforced the vision and demand for the formal development of OWLE.

In 1997, documents for affiliate status with the IAWP were completed. Official affiliate designation was approved by the IAWP Board of Directors at the annual training conference in Dallas, Texas. A conference bid was prepared and approved for the hosting of an IAWP conference in Toronto in 2000.

On September 19, 1997 a training day was organized at the Capital Banquet Center in Mississauga. Dr. Marjory Kerr Ph.D. provided an informative session on the topic of Behavioral Interviewing techniques – Preparing for your Interview. This was well by attended by both women and men in law enforcement from across the province. The

training concluded with a dinner and keynote addresses from Guelph Police Chief Lenna Bradburn and retired Hamilton Officer Jessie Stoneman. (Costs for members were \$35 and non members \$40.)

The first OWLE newsletter was prepared by Pauline Gray and published in September 1997. Secretary Lee-Ann Ansell (Halton) initiated the first membership email database. In Pauline's remarks, she stated "*...but more than the training the contacts and the professional growth, it allows me to feel passion for this association for the people it has brought into my life. They are my friends, some of my closest. We learn from each other, lean on each other and cheer for each other.*" The newsletter was two pages 8.5 x 11 double-sided containing messages from the president and editor, and also contained membership updates and IAWP Toronto 2000 conference information.

On April 22, 1998 Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services, Robert Runciman announced that Gwen Boniface was to be appointed as the Commissioner of the OPP. She was introduced as the first female commissioner of the OPP, and officially sworn in on May 28, 1998.

In 1998, OWLE hosted their first awards banquet in Mississauga. There were 26 major award nominations. Studio 2 –TVO host Ms. Paula Todd was the master of ceremonies, while OPP Commissioner Gwen Boniface provided the keynote address. Corporate sponsorship included support from Cara Operations, CAA Central Ontario, Canadian Body Armour and General Mills.

In the fall of 1998, members of OWLE Executive supported their sisters to the east from the Atlantic Women In Law Enforcement. Two executive members traveled to Gagetown, New Brunswick to attend their training conference and share information about OWLE and IAWP. RCMP Officer Kathy Long was the AWLE President at the time.

The second edition of the OWLE newsletter was published in the summer of 1998. It consisted of 4 pages double-sided and featured Commissioner Boniface's announcement as well as the establishment of the first OWLE Advisory Board, to be led by retired Hamilton Police Superintendent, Lynda Bowen.

In April 1999, issue the third of the OWLE newsletter was circulated. It featured information about the OWLE Spring Training Seminar, being held on May 13, 1999 at Toronto Police Service headquarters. The professional development session included a presentation by Helen Wilkie – Communications Specialist, Debbie Mahaffey – Victim Advocate and Assistant Crown Attorney Katherine Livingstone(Halton).

In 1999, the OWLE Mission & Values Statement was developed and published July 10th. On 19th and 20th of October, OWLE partnered with Halton Regional Police to host a two day Drug Interdiction seminar in Halton.

Pauline Gray was busy in 1999 as she prepared a July edition of the newsletter that included details about the OWLE Fall Training Day. It featured seminars on Stress and the Justice Practitioner by Dr. Marilyn Hadad, from Ryerson Polytechnic University and Career Pathing, presented by Donna Messer. A social hour celebration acknowledging

25 years of Women in OPP Policing concluded the day for the attendees. The event was held at OPP Headquarters in Orillia.

Fall 1999 saw the publication of the fourth edition of the OWLE newsletter. It was three pages double-sided and was full of information about the 2000 IAWP Toronto conference, including the release of the conference insignia. Volunteer requests and IAWP Toronto 2000 information dominated this newsletter.

OWLE Board members prepared an exhibit for the IAWP conference in Philadelphia and traveled there in the Toronto Police Service bus. It was apparent by the interest demonstrated at the exhibit that the 2000 conference was destined to be a success.

The 2nd Annual OWLE Awards Banquet was held on November 19, 1999. All of the OWLE award nominee's names (30) were published in the fall newsletter.

In 2000, efforts were concentrated on the preparation and delivery of the IAWP Toronto training conference. All of the OWLE Board members along with dozens of other volunteers participated in the conference planning/hosting. The conference was a huge success, attracting almost 1,000 participants from 19 nations over the course of the 4-day event, held at the Sheraton Centre in Toronto. It also resulted in a deposit of approximately \$35,000 to the OWLE bank account!

In the spring of 2001, OWLE transitioned into a new format for the newsletter. It had now evolved into a magazine format featuring five coloured photos on the cover. This would be the last edition that Amy Ramsay would sign as President. Her departing quote was, "*I believe Longfellow was correct when he said, Do not follow where the path may lead. Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.*" Dr. Amy Ramsay would step down from her presidential role with the OWLE to become Executive Director of the International Association of Women, in 2000, and later President, in 2006. She also remained involved with the OWLE Board of Trustees.

An interesting statistic from the spring magazine stated that, nationally there were twice as many women police officers as of June 2000 compared to the previous decade. In 1990 there were 3,573 female police officers representing just over 6% of all officers. By June 2001 there were 7,658 female police officers, accounting for almost 14% of the total in Canada. British Columbia had the highest percentage at 18%. Pauline Gray continued as the editor, blessing the OWLE board with her determination to collect articles and deliver a professional publication.

On May 4, 2001 OWLE hosted the 3rd Annual Awards Banquet. Due to the demands of the IAWP 2000 Toronto conference, an OWLE awards ceremony did not take place in 2000.

In the fall of 2001, the magazine cover included the Canadian and American flag acknowledging the events of 9/11. Front page quote stated, "*We are each of us angels with only one wing and we can only fly embracing one another.*" Names of the new members of the OWLE Executive members were published and Lisa Hodgins, from the Toronto Police Service became the new President. The centerfold featured coloured photographs of the annual award recipients, including Gina Bellamy/Jessie Stoneman for Heritage Award, OPP Cst. Kim Wright for Community Service, TPS Acting Staff

Inspector Jane Dick for Leadership and Judge Lauren Marshal as an award presenter. Articles included submissions regarding The Importance of Victim Management in Investigations, Networking: A Key Leadership Activity and the introduction of the new Board of Directors under the leadership of Lisa Hodgins. The magazine was supported by advertisements from Ready Import Ltd. and Royal LePage.

On September 14th, 2001 OWLE hosted the fall training day in the auditorium at the Toronto Police Headquarters. Featured speakers were Windsor Police Service Chief Glenn Stannard who delivered information about Leadership Challenges of Policing International Events and OPP Detective Sergeant Brad Moore who provided details about Geographic Profiling. OWLE member's registration was \$15 and non-members were \$25.

The 25-Year Service Awards were introduced in 2001 and resulted in an expanded opportunity to reach out to women with significant years of service. A total of 29 civilian and sworn members were recognized with a lazar engraved plaque that included their name and agency.

In the fall of 2002, the magazine continued the same format that had been established in early 2001. Two pages were committed to an interview with Ottawa Police Service Deputy Chief Sue O'Sullivan. In the article she was asked, what are the tools of your success? Her response, *"In order to be successful as a police leader you must first understand your environment, establish strategic priorities, deliver the promise and then assess the performance. It is important to understand that your strategy is about making choices and being accountable for those choices."* Other magazine articles included details about the Youth Criminal Justice Act, Listening-Why we don't hear others and centerfold photos, featuring annual award recipients.

The 2002 awards banquet continued to gain support with an increase in the quantity of nominations submitted for awards and the recognition of the service awards. The past and present Board of Directors fine-tuned the banquet planning process with Pauline Gray, Joanne Tawton, Lisa Hodgins and Amy Ramsay playing significant roles. Their experiences from the IAWP 2000 conference provided them with an expanded knowledge of hosting events. Everyone involved in the conference planning learned so much!!! OWLE Advisory Board Chair Lynda Bowen (Hamilton Police Service) officially retired and continued her role on the Board.

The 2002 fall magazine edition featured a colour photo of all the annual award nominees and a coloured centerfold with five photos. The Law Enforcement Professional of the Year was OPP Det/Cst Colleen McCormick and four other OPP members were award recipients, combined with two members from the Toronto Police Service. The magazine also featured some details about Pauline Gray's participation on a television program with Sue Sgambati. Pauline's objective – promote the OWLE and share her experience in relation to mentoring. Two pages were committed to preparing readers for the transition (April 2003) to the Criminal Youth Justice Act. IAWP Executive Director Amy Ramsay announced the board approval of the IAWP Foundation initiative.

In the fall of 2003, the magazine front cover included a group photo of the IAWP Region 11 delegates taken at the war memorial in Canberra, Australia. Once again, Pauline Gray provided an enlightening article that is likely to be a feature in an upcoming edition. The

impetus of the article was “Please stop counting us.” . This edition was the first one to introduce the new www.owle.org web site. All of the 2003 award recipients were chronicled, including the 2003 Heritage Award recipient – Retired Hamilton Superintendent Lynda Bowen. Lynda was, and continues to be, a role model for women in Hamilton. She played a significant role in the development of the Hamilton Police funding criteria and dedicated budget for members attending the annual IAWP conference. Several serving OWLE Executive members were major award recipients; June Dobson, Brenda Glass, and Isobel Anderson. The Team Endeavours Award was introduced at the banquet which featured Sue Sgambati as the MC for the evening. Olympian Jeff Adams was the guest speaker.

The spring 2004 magazine consisted of eighteen pages and included articles such as: Proactive Interview Skills, Graffiti Vandalism, Balancing Shift Work and Working in the North. The cover featured 28 officers in front of an authentic street car in San Francisco during the IAWP training conference. Several OWLE members were recipients of IAWP awards that were presented during the IAWP Conference in San Francisco. Dr. Amy Ramsay stated, “It is difficult to express just how significant the OWLE is regarded by the IAWP.” OPP Senior Cst. Val Jarvis and friends promoted the Women’s Shelter in Uganda and could be seen at various times throughout the year initiating fund raising for the shelter. Five-year OWLE memberships were introduced.

John Walsh, of America’s Most Wanted, was featured on the back cover of the summer 2004 magazine. Retired TPS Officer Kristine Bacharach took the photo and transitioned into the role of magazine editor, with Pauline Gray as her mentor. The magazine editor’s role was known to all to be one of the most time-consuming and demanding roles on the executive. Kristine’s spirit, enthusiasm and experience were a welcomed edition to the board. Her role as Toronto Police Media Officer was another advantage for her as our Editor. The summer edition was 24-pages in length, with a colourful centerfold including 19 full-colour photos taken during the 1st Annual OWLE Training Conference, which was held in Niagara Falls. The front cover of the magazine featured two Niagara Police Mounted Officers with the Skylon Tower as the backdrop. Feature articles included details of a fund-raising initiative by the Guelph Police Service (called Girls With Guns), School Threat Assessment, Personal Wellness and Pulling Together to name a few.

Saskatoon Police Sergeant Shelley Ballard attended the first OWLE conference (May 5-7/04) to promote the 2006 IAWP Conference, scheduled for Saskatoon. Her conference team managed to secure a short video clip of Wayne Gretzky promoting the 2006 IAWP conference. Our OWLE conference featured training topics such as: Relationship Terrorism, Crisis Intervention in Corrections, Abuse of Seniors, Technology Crime, Leadership and Management. The keynote speaker was The Honourable Marion Boyd. OPP Commissioner Gwen Boniface was featured at a plenary session. Conference delegates enjoyed a social evening at the Angels Gate Winery, as well as the Awards Banquet which was held at the Hilton Hotel, in Niagara Falls. Eleanor Wood was the guest speaker at the awards banquet.

Kristine Bacharach was busy in her first year as Editor. She compiled the December 2004 edition, which featured Niagara Police Chief Wendy Southall on the cover. Several OWLE Board Members enjoyed attending Chief Southall’s swearing in ceremony, on November 17th. Members learned about OWLE initiatives for 2005, which included hosting the Spring Board Meetings of the IAWP in Niagara Falls and plans for the 2nd

Annual OWLE Training Conference, in Toronto. Feature articles included Internet Safety, Stress in the Workplace, Book Review – 1045 Spells Death, along with photos and information about Chief Southall's appointment. The centerfold included sixteen colour photos taken at the IAWP Boston conference and featured IAWP Award recipients. Several OWLE members traveled to Boston for the conference, it was a pleasant drive and an ideal opportunity for personal growth and development. Several attendees utilized some vacation time and traveled to Cape Cod following the conference.

After seven years of consistent membership dues, the OWLE Board decided to increase the annual membership to \$35 in the spring of 2005. Five-year memberships were available for \$125.00 and dues could be applied to Visa.

On January 16/05 Ontario Provincial Police Sergeant Dr. Amy Ramsay (OWLE Founding President) successfully defended her 2nd doctoral degree. The degree in Management & Organization with a specialization in Leadership was achieved through Capella University in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Amy had commenced work for her 2nd doctoral studies in late 2000 and, as many of you know, she worked diligently to complete it. Her thesis was an exploratory study on a government led Police Education program. This magnificent accomplishment was Amy's fifth degree...and 2nd doctorate. She is the ultimate example of someone who sets a goal for herself and maintains focus, dedication and commitment until she reaches the GOAL!!!

Toronto Police Sergeant Jenny Newton invited several OWLE and IAWP friends to the Change of Command ceremonies on January 16/05, held in Hamilton. Jenny was appointed Lieutenant-Colonel of the 23rd (Hamilton) Service Battalion. She has an extensive military background, dating back to 1977 when she began her career as an administrative clerk with the 48 Highlanders of Canada.

Additional OWLE member highlights for 2005 included:

- Saleha J. Khan successfully secured a permanent position at the Ontario Police College. She manages the Race Relations and Adult Education Unit.
- OPP Supt. Irena Lawrenson retired in 2005. Colleagues, family and friends celebrated her retirement at Hawkridge Golf and Country Club.
- In February 2005, Orange County Sheriff Dept. Captain Christine Murray initiated an OWLE membership drive at Mardi Gras. Christine has been an OWLE member ever since she saw the magazine in Boston 2004. She recruited new members including:
 - New Jersey State Police Sergeant Eileen Gileece
 - San Francisco Inspector Robyn Matthews
 - San Francisco Lieutenant Lynette Hogue
 - Louisiana Attorney General Investigator Linda Law

This initiative soon flourished and resulted in the recruitment of several other American members as well as British Transport Police Inspector Jane Townsley.

In the spotlight was the theme for the 2005 OWLE Training Conference, held at the Stage West Hotel in Mississauga, May 4-6. The professional development topics included internet luring, forensic dentistry, biker enforcement, criminal harassment/stalking and warrant preparation - just to name a few. Law enforcement staff from across the province attended the conference, as well as from the Atlantic Women in Law Enforcement

President, RCMP officer Chris MacNaughton. Eleanor Wood provided her natural humour during a lunch time session, as well as Lynda Bowen - who shared details of her 30-year career with the Hamilton Police Service. During the conference delegates enjoyed the training by day, as well as a Stage West performance and buffet dinner on the evening of May 5th.

The year 2005 was a significant one for OWLE as plans were made to host the IAWP Spring Board Meetings simultaneously with the OWLE Training Conference. While IAWP board members had two full days of meetings in Niagara Falls, OWLE members and friends enjoyed training at Stage West. The training syllabus was arranged by OWLE Professional Development Directors June Dobson and Kathleen Doherty.

The OWLE Awards Banquet was held at the Capitol Banquet Center and featured Master of Ceremonies TPS Cst. Pat Fleishmann, who would go on to become the annual MC known for her professional, articulate delivery. The banquet was enhanced by the presence of over 30 IAWP Board Members who wore their uniforms from the services they represented. This brings back memories of some transportation confusion that caused me some personal stress on the day of the banquet. What do you do with 30 people waiting patiently in a hotel lobby for a bus that never comes?????? You try to stay calm, assess options and make quick spontaneous arrangements which ultimately ensure safe prompt arrival of the delegates at the banquet. Special thanks to Lloyd Hodgins for his calming influence! (Note to others; follow up with transportation arrangements a few days in advance to confirm details thus avoiding significant stress!)

All of the major award nominees received beautifully framed certificates at a reception prior to the banquet. A number of 25 and 30-Year Service Awards were also presented. This year, the OWLE recognized two 35-Year Service Award recipients – from Ottawa Police Service, Barb Pioro, and from the Hamilton Police Service, Brenda Slattery. Toronto Police Service Staff Inspector Marlene Watson was recognized during the formal banquet, and received a 40-Year Service Award. Marlene received the 2004 OWLE Heritage Award and presented the 2005 award to Ontario Provincial Police Staff Sergeant Wendy Wilson.

Waterloo Police Service Superintendent Rita Westbrook agreed to Chair the Advisory Council, commencing in 2005. The primary function of the Advisory Board is to review the annual award nominations and to identify the recipients, then report the results to the OWLE Executive Board. A special thank you was extended to Retired Hamilton Supt. Lynda Bowen, who chaired the Advisory Council for many years.

As well, Leanne Fitch, Fredericton Police Service, was promoted to Deputy Chief. She accepted her new role on September 19/05 and joined appointed Chief Barry MacKnight to lead the 100 member service.

The OWLE Civilian Award of Achievement was introduced in 2005. The new award recognized the achievements of women who are not sworn officers, but are equally important to law enforcement at all levels. The award is given to the individual who contributes by way of providing significant support to her law enforcement colleagues in some capacity. This support may be demonstrated through leadership, job-related community service activities, mentoring or excellence in performance. Ms. Brenda Radix of the Toronto Police Service was the first recipient. She had been a member of

her police service since 1982. She has worked in a variety of areas, but primarily in the area of evidence and property management. Brenda went on to receive the first IAWP Civilian Award as well. She was presented with her award in Leeds, England.

The year 2005 was a great year for OWLE award recipients, as they swept 8 of 10 of the annual IAWP Awards in Leeds, England. Award recipients were:

- o Civilian Service Award – Brenda Radix – Toronto Police Service
- o Medal of Valour – Constable Bernadine Chapman – RCMP
- o Community Service – Staff Sergeant Heidi Schellhorn – York P.S.
- o Mentoring – Sergeant Myra James – Hamilton Police Service
- o Leadership – Sergeant Amy Ramsay – Ontario Provincial Police
- o Excellence in Performance – Sergeant Sandra McLaren – Ottawa P.S.
- o Officer of the Year – Staff Sergeant Eva Reti – Durham P.S.

At the end of 2005 Toronto Police Service Sergeant Lisa Hodgins retired after serving 26 years. She was the OWLE President at the time and completed her term to the end of 2006. One of her final articles in the OWLE magazine included the following, *“I look back fondly and with great pride on my policing career. I can honestly say that there wasn’t a day when I didn’t want to go to work. Not many can say that about their chosen career.”*

In the spring of 2006 members of the OWLE Executive would prepare and display an exhibit at the annual Blue Line Trade Show at LeParc Conference Centre in Mississauga. This would be the third consecutive year for such a display and OWLE were grateful for the complimentary exhibit space.

The 2006 OWLE Conference theme was “Are We Ready?” May 4 & 5th delegates enjoyed valuable training at the Stage West Hotel venue in Mississauga. A highlight for conference attendees was a presentation by Louisiana Attorney General’s Office Investigator Linda Law, who provided an informative overview of the Hurricane Katrina incident and details about how law enforcement coordinated efforts to assist victims. Additional training topics included an overview of the Holly Jones homicide investigation presented by Toronto Detectives Alan Comeau and Dave Perry, a Leadership presentation by Deborah Newman-Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, Counter Terrorism by RCMP Inspector Jamie Jagoe and a Diversity overview by OPC Instructor Saleha Khan.

OWLE international members - Captain Christine Murray, from Orange County Sheriff’s Department and San Francisco Officer’s Robyn Matthews and Lynette Hogue, played a significant role in organizing the shipping of supplies for officers providing support for the Hurricane Katrina survivors. Linda Law facilitated distribution when the donations arrived in Louisiana.

In mid June 2006, St. Thomas Police Service elected their first female President. Constable Lois Kaastra was elected by a significant margin. St. Thomas has 56 sworn members and 19 civilians. Lois’s term will be until December 31, 2006. Also in June, York Regional Police promoted their first female Inspector – Karen Noakes.

Our thoughts and prayers were extended to the Blahowski family and Glenda Baker. On 23 August 2006, a dear friend, mentor, confidant and honorary Canadian passed away.

Mary Jo Blahowski (IAWP Region 8 Coordinator) held a special place in the hearts of everyone who knew her. A very courageous woman - her legend will live on as the annual IAWP Leadership Award was named in her memory.

Several OWLE members participated in an All Canadian IAWP ice hockey game at the annual IAWP conference in Saskatoon. The team was called the BULLETS and featured players from across Canada. Players would enjoy being treated like Queens for their participation and will have pleasant memories of interaction with Coach Shannon Miller.

On October 22, 2006 Ontario Provincial Police Cst. Val Jarvis coordinated the “Coppers bringing Change to the World” initiative in Haliburton. She enlisted the support of the participants of the Canada World Youth exchange program which included the two young men that Val (and her husband, Rick) were hosting for 11-weeks. Overall, it was a most successful event that was enjoyed by all participants.

By the end of 2006 the current serving OWLE Board of Directors would be preparing for a spring board election and planning for the 10th anniversary of the organization in 2007.