



AWHsome

*Newsletter of Advancement of Women Halton*

*AWH is a collaborative of twenty women's groups and social agencies that advocate and amplify the voice of women. The monthly meetings give us an opportunity to hear about the activities and challenges of member organizations. This newsletter is another avenue for readers to learn about AWH member activities during the previous month.*



*April 2026*

## In this issue

### March Happenings

- International Women's Day
- CCAH
- GASP

### Coming in April

- Ubuntu

### Issues & News From AWH, Our Members and Partners

- Child Care
- Disability – without poverty
- Equality
- Health
- Housing
- International

### News From Local Politicians and Local Governments

- MPP Effie Triantafilopoulos
- Minister Stephen Crawford
- Region of Halton

### Other Items of Interest

- Marianne Singh-Waraich
- CFUW Ontario Council
- Canadian Women's Foundation
- The Lancet

### Final Word

## MARCH HAPPENINGS

### INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY



#### The Dinner Party 2026

Around 400 people enjoyed a delightful celebration of International Women's Day at the WHAM annual Dinner Party, beginning with indigenous drummers, "Voices of the Land", who sang the Strong Woman song. Later there were ethereal songs from 2 young women, Sarah Rousel and Jillian Vanderdoelen.

Sylvia Samsa told us about the work that SAVIS increasingly and unfailingly does in Halton for women experiencing violence and Linda Middaugh celebrated the dauntless women and girls of Afghanistan who are finding ways to complete their education despite the efforts of the Taliban.

The highlight of the evening was an entertaining and thought-provoking talk from Kate McKenna, award winning broadcaster and producer and creator of the series "Momlife Crisis", on the value and impact of honesty and authenticity.

Ticket proceeds plus a 50/50 draw and an on-line auction raised a total of close to \$40,000 for SAVIS and Right to Learn Afghanistan.



### CANADIAN LABOUR CONGRESS

#### The Care Economy Is Canada's Untapped Economic Superpower

Women and gender diverse workers do much of the care work that keeps our families, workplaces and communities moving.

Too often this work is underpaid, undervalued or unpaid altogether. That's why, this International Women's Day we're calling for the federal government to invest in the Care Economy.

The pay gap is real. Women still earn just 89c for every dollar men earn. Care work powers the economy. Nearly 1 in 5 workers in Canada work in the care economy. Unpaid care in Canada is worth up to \$860 Billion.

[Read more](#)



Mouvement de soutien des **grands-mères**

One of the International Women’s Day themes for this year is *Give to Gain* and is an international call to contribute to gender

equality within our own spheres of influence.

When individuals, organizations, and communities give generously, opportunities and support for women and girls increase. Contributing to the advancement of women and girls helps create a more equal, supportive and interconnected world where all can thrive.

At work, at home, and in the community, there are many ways we each can give to gain gender equity.

We can give respect, equal pay, safety, donations, celebration, training, visibility, sponsorship, encouragement, knowledge mentoring, credit, momentum, justice, budget, role models, resources, introductions, growth, a voice, workshops, access, protection, opportunities, truth and time.



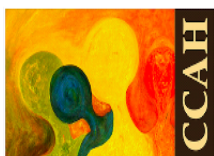
This International Women’s Day, Canada’s unions are Rising Up to demand a worker-centred economic strategy that puts women’s economic justice at its core.

It’s time for action on the real economic challenges impacting workers and their families from coast to coast to coast.

“Gender equality is not a side issue; it is central to Canada’s economic security. A resilient care economy, strong public services, and decent union jobs are strategic assets that strengthen communities and industries alike,” said Bea Bruske, President of the CLC.

[Read more](#)

MORE MARCH HAPPENINGS



Thank you to everyone who came out and supported Black History Month 2026: *Out of Many Cultures, One People*. From our Launch Concert and Art Exhibit to Reading Corners, history lessons, and community gatherings, your presence helped make the month a meaningful celebration of culture, history, connection, and pride. We’re grateful for the opportunity to honour Black excellence and look forward to continuing to celebrate Black history and contributions all year long.

Coming Up

Get your aprons ready because CCAH is launching “Sizzling Halton” cooking classes in the Spring!

Dionne



Just a few of GASP’s activities in March:

March 8: David Suzuki Play at Burlington Centre for Performing Arts.

March 14: Palestine Land Exercise Oakville. An immersive workshop at Munns United Church on history and current conditions in Palestine

March 22: Songs for Gaza at St Paul’s United Church

*Kevin Thomason, Vice-chair Grand River Environmental Network (GREN), GASP members: Sharon Sommerville, Victoria Creese, and Kathy Geczi. Beside Kathy is Dr. Richard Thomas*



March 12: GASP members along with GREN Vice-Chair Kevin Thomason and natural resource management expert Dr. Richard Thomas met to hold the Premier accountable for his environmental policies that damage Ontario's natural assets. Premier Ford was given the ‘Don’t Bulldoze Our Future Award’ for his deregulation policies that threaten Ontario’s land, water and ecosystems and have a direct correlation to the water capacity crisis in Waterloo. The group called for

environmental safeguards together with investments in Ontario’s natural infrastructure to provide resiliency now and in the future.



March 26 GASP members helped organize a "Don't bulldoze our future. Rally to Defend our Land & Water" at Queen 's Park.

Lorraine Green wrote:” While Mother Nature didn’t co-

operate, it was a great rally. You had amazing speakers and kept things moving along so well. You all worked so hard on this event, and I wanted to thank you for all your efforts. We know what Doug Ford is all about and we will continue to push back. Grandmothers don’t give up!

Well done!

So proud of all you fabulous GASPs.



COMING IN APRIL



Ubuntu The Burlington Ubuntu Grandwomen's Maple Syrup Fundraiser  
Delicious maple syrup plus a collection of favourite maple syrup recipes  
Contact [paulinegweber@gmail.com](mailto:paulinegweber@gmail.com) 613-243-1783

Pick up Thursday April 16, 3.00 to 6.00 pm at the Burlington Baptist Church, 2225 New Street, East Door

Here are just a few examples of what your support can provide:

mattress for an orphan; school attendance for a vulnerable child in Uganda; microloan for women in East Africa; bicycle for a student or worker in Malawi; fortified porridge for one year for a child; one day of caregiver training; school uniform for a child; annual college tuition; mosquito net for malaria protection



### Equal Pay Day Rally 2026 Equal Pay Can't Wait!

Join us at the Pillars of Justice on **April 14<sup>th</sup>(Equal Pay Day)**, as we demand accountability and real action to close the gender pay gap.

This is the Ontario Equal Pay Coalition's 50th year fighting this battle - and it's time for change.

**DATE: April 14, 2026**

**TIME: 12:15 PM**

**LOCATION: Pillars of Justice, 361 University Ave, Toronto**

[\*\*READ MORE HERE\*\*](#)

ISSUES & NEWS FROM AWH, OUR MEMBERS and PARTNERS

## Child Care



AWH has sent a letter to the Prime Minister, and local MPs, asking the government to further enshrine the values and principles of the Canada Early Learning and Child Care Act through a continuous process of adequate investment, design, planning, and collaboration with the provinces and Indigenous peoples, that a Canada-wide universal, affordable, inclusive and high quality early learning and child care system will be fully developed and maintained.



Ontario Coalition for Better Childcare

New from the Association of Early Childhood Educators, the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, and our partners and allies! [The Care Counts campaign](#) is a multi-year advocacy campaign aimed at securing decent work and pay for Early Childhood Educators and childcare workers, as part of a fully and sufficiently publicly funded \$10aDay early learning and childcare program in Ontario, and across the broader early years and childcare sector.



---

‘We’re being shortchanged’: Halton wants more \$10-a-day child care spaces in Oakville, Milton, Burlington and Halton Hills By [Roland Cilliers](#), Oakville Beaver

At the Feb. 18 Halton Regional Council meeting, staff told councillors that despite receiving millions in additional provincial funding this year — and having [operators ready and willing to expand](#) — no new CWELCC spaces will be added locally.

Launched in 2022, CWELCC is a funding agreement between the federal and provincial governments aimed at reducing the average cost of childcare in Ontario to \$10 per day by 2026. The Ontario government determines how many CWELCC spaces each community receives.

Halton currently has 19,800 CWELCC spaces. Regional staff say multiple daycare operators are prepared to join the program and could collectively provide an estimated 4,200 additional affordable childcare spaces.

The Ministry of Education has allocated more than \$267 million to Halton Region for 2026 — an increase of roughly \$22.5 million over the previous year. Rather than funding new spaces, the additional money will support inflationary pressures faced by childcare operators and increases to the base wage for workers.

[Read More](#)

---

## Disability - without poverty



disability  
without  
poverty

Canada Groceries and Essentials Benefit

In January 2026, [the government announced](#) the new Canada Groceries and Essentials Benefit (CGEB), a crucial step forward and a direct response to sustained cross sector advocacy. Yet as currently designed, the CGEB falls short of what’s needed to meaningfully reduce food insecurity.

- A one-time top-up: In spring 2026, eligible households will receive an extra payment equal to half of their 2025/26 GST/HST credit. The government estimates up to \$950 for a single person and \$1,890 for a family of four.

- A temporary increase: Starting July 2026, the base benefit will increase by 25% and stay at that higher level for five years. It will also be adjusted for inflation. The government estimates up to \$700 per year for a single person and \$1,400 per year for a family of four.

How the CGEB should be improved

- Make it permanent, in order to provide stability and long-term income security.
- Target households earning under \$60,000 a year who are struggling to afford basic needs.
- Provide adequate monthly benefit levels that meaningfully reduce food insecurity:
- Reflect the higher costs and realities in the North, including introducing top-ups.
- Ensure strong and equitable support for low-income single adults aged 18–64.
- Maintain predictable, monthly delivery through the tax system.

The CGEB is a welcome step. With targeted improvements, it could become a powerful tool to reduce food insecurity across Canada.

Explaining the CGEB groceries benefit primer at <https://righttofood.ca/policy-primer-the-groceries-and-essentials-benefit/>

---

## Equality



From Linda Silver Dranoff

*FAIRLY EQUAL: Conversations Toward a Feminist Future* is a series of five conversations with eminent and thoughtful feminists in which we take stock of the status of our decades-long activism for equality and social justice and explore the vigilance and sisterhood that is required to sustain and advance a feminist future.

The wide-ranging conversations, which I host, explore Violence against Women, Reproductive Rights, Workplace Harassment, Pay Equity and Child Care, and Power: Politics and Journalism.

Knowledgeable participants include Constance Backhouse, Danielle Bisnar, Mary Cornish, Karina Gould, Deepa Mattoo, Chi Nguyen, Debbie Owusu-Akyeeah, Karyn Pugliese, Elizabeth Renzetti, Janice Rubin, and Leisha Toory,

A more complete description of the series, the issues, the participants can be found on the website [www.fairlyequalseries.com](http://www.fairlyequalseries.com)

---

## Health



AWH has sent a letter to local MPPs, the Minister of Health and Minister of Long-Term Care concerning the newly proposed Community Access to Long Term Care program, as well confirming our support for public health care for all.



## National Day of Action to Protect Healthcare

*Hundreds came out to call on our federal Liberal MPs to help us stop Alberta & Ontario's privatization, enforce the Canada Health Act & bring this issue back to their caucus as a priority.*

On Monday March 16, people across Canada rallied outside the offices of their local Liberal Members of Parliament in a nationwide Day of Action to warn that public health care for all in Canada is under unprecedented threat from privatization and to call on the federal government to enforce the Canada Health Act. There were seven events in Ontario in Ajax, Hamilton, London, Peterborough, Toronto and Waterloo -- and one more in Kingston on Friday, March 20.

[Read More](#) about the demonstrations and issues



---

## Housing



City of Burlington Council unanimously voted to support Indwell moving towards creating supportive affordable housing on city-owned properties at 1022-1030 Waterdown Road in Aldershot.

The City of Burlington has been working hard to make this happen for the past year, and we'll continue to work hard together with a goal of acquiring a building permit by the end of the year with shovels in the ground in early 2027. [Here's a link to an article](#) in today's Hamilton Spectator with more details.



### Halton Faith Communities Advocates for the Unhoused

A proposed supportive housing development at 1022, 1028 and 1030 Waterdown Rd. is moving forward after Burlington councillors backed a framework that would see Indwell build and operate 74 affordable rental units using Housing Accelerator Fund with support from members of the Halton Faith Communities Advocates for the Unhoused

Indwell has a second project which is [1400 Plains Road West](#). If you know the City View Motel, it is now City View Apartments. By April 2026, this project will be the new home of a number of Burlington residents from the Halton wait list.

## International



Advocacy: A Critical Window for Action is Open

Between now and April 30, UN member states can support the inclusion of gender apartheid in the draft Convention on Crimes Against Humanity, making it a prosecutable crime within international law. This step would strengthen protections for women globally, particularly in Afghanistan where women's rights have been systematically undermined by the country's rulers.

We invite you to read these recent publications by Right to Learn as we advocate for policy changes to criminalize gender apartheid.

► [Gender Apartheid is a Crime Against Humanity. Treat It That Way \(The Real Story\)](#) By Dr. Lauryn Oates, Executive Director

Examines the Taliban's new laws and Canada's role in supporting the draft Convention.

► [As the Taliban Codify Gender Apartheid, the World Must Criminalize It \(The Diplomat\)](#) By Murwarid Ziayee, Senior Director and Dr. Lauryn Oates, Executive Director

Explains why global recognition of gender apartheid is urgently needed.

► [Afghanistan Under Taliban Rule Makes the World Less Safe \(The Diplomat\)](#)

By Nazila Jamshidi, Board Director, and Annie Pforzheimer, Diplomat & Peace and Security Expert Discusses growing extremism in Afghanistan and the pending global repercussions.



WASH Action Accelerates: It's Time to Deliver!

Time to Deliver is a global advocacy campaign calling on world leaders to deliver clean water and safe healthcare for women and babies everywhere. Women, healthcare workers and allies across eighteen countries have begun raising our voices in support of the campaign launched this week by WaterAid International. GRAN is a part of this global effort.

[Read More](#)

## Remembering Stephen Lewis, 1937 – 2026

It is with profound sadness that the Foundation shares the news of the passing of our co-founder Stephen Lewis.



Stephen was a respected humanitarian who spent his life championing social justice and human rights. Throughout his political and international careers, he was committed to creating a more equitable world.

**“We learned, early on, that the strength and resilience of communities and community projects is the road to hope, to empathy, to survival. The Stephen Lewis Foundation will never let its guard down. We know the tasks are herculean.”** Stephen Lewis, Grassroots, 2021

### Read More

Dear Grandmothers and Grandothers,

We are delighted to announce the 20th Anniversary Celebration of the Stephen Lewis Foundation's Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign, which will take place in Ottawa, Canada, from October 5–7, 2026!

This milestone event will honour two impactful decades of meaningful solidarity, powerful advocacy and the remarkable leadership of grandmothers and grandothers across Africa and Canada, and around the world.

We are excited for this special opportunity to come together, reconnect and celebrate all we have achieved through collective action. We hope that members from all Grandmothers to Grandmothers Campaign groups will join us for this memorable event

### NEWS FROM LOCAL POLITICIANS and LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

News from MPP Effie Triantafilopoulos

On International Women’s Day, we celebrate the strength, resilience, and achievements of women and girls in Oakville and across Canada. We honour the trailblazers who broke barriers, the leaders who inspire us, and the everyday heroes including mothers, daughters, mentors, and friends who lift our communities higher every single day.

I appreciated the opportunity to meet Callie and Ish from Phoenix Arise Foundation to learn more about their work combating human trafficking and supporting survivors. We discussed their efforts in education, advocacy, and community programs, and explored ways the province can strengthen collaboration to better protect vulnerable individuals and support those affected.

Great visit to Oakville Parent-Child Centre to learn more about their incredible programs supporting families in our community. Thank you to Lisa, Sue, Logan, and Kim for the tour and a productive discussion on the important services you provide. Resources like Early ON programs offer free support, learning, and connection for parents, caregivers, and young

children. I encourage families to learn more about this valuable community resource: [Click here](#)

Some of this year's recipients from the Ontario Trillium Foundation in Oakville North Burlington include:

- Children's Aid Society of the Regional Municipality of Halton received \$368,000 through the Ontario Trillium Foundation's Grow Grant program to expand mentorship and skill-building supports for youth in foster care, helping connect young people with trained mentors and build confidence, leadership skills, and pathways to independence.
- Community Living Oakville received \$88,000 through the Ontario Trillium Foundation's Seed Grant program to deliver *Next Steps*, a program that helps youth with developmental disabilities build skills and confidence as they prepare for adulthood.

---

News from Hon. Stephen Crawford, MPP Oakville and Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery and Procurement

Investment in Healthcare in Halton Region: The Ontario government is increasing funding for additional CT scan hours; to expand local diagnostic imaging capacity; to support expanded surgical capacity and to support key public health initiatives and service delivery priorities.

And for the Province: The government is investing to expand the province's healthcare workforce (training for RNs, primary care nurse practitioners and physician assistants) Investing in planning expanded care teaching clinics, approving access to 6 life-extending cancer drugs through the FAST program and investing in training new long term care staff.

---

From The Region of Halton

Thank you to all who contribute to the local Food Banks. This Regional report reinforces why your support is needed. We encourage you to read the detail to learn how Halton Region supports individuals and why it is not enough.

The [Ontario Nutritious Food Basket](#) is a survey tool that measures the cost of basic healthy eating based on current nutrition recommendations and average food purchasing patterns. The results for 2025 show that to provide a basic healthy diet for the reference family of four, the weekly cost is \$299.16, up 3% from 2024.

20.4% of Halton residents face food insecurity due to inadequate income to afford sufficient, nutritious food.

[Read More](#) about the 2025 report *Household Food Affordability*

---

## OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST

Marianne Singh-Waraich

*Marianne was honoured as a long-time member of CFUW Burlington in the February 2026 issue of the CFUW Ontario Council newsletter.*



CFUW saved my sanity when I joined the Burlington club in the early 70s while I was at home with four young children and in need of some intellectual stimulation. My book club led to 50 years of enjoyment. Within the club, I served as president in 1980 and again recently. After attending Ontario Council's meetings, I became interested in the larger organization and became National Director of Resolutions in 2002.

[Read more about](#) Marianne's work for CFUW, Graduate Women International, attending conferences in New York, Mexico City, Istanbul, Cape Town, Geneva and Lusaka, Zambia.



Learning, Deciding, Doing  
by Sandra Shaw, CFUW Ontario Council President

Advocacy is a word laden with responsibility and 'work'. It often feels heavy, even clinical - like it belongs in the vocabulary of lawyers, big charities, or activists. It feels daunting and intimidating and carries echoes of complex politics and endless struggles. But for CFUW Ontario Council, advocacy is an engine of our mission. It is transitioning from "knowing better" to "doing better".

...

What are better ways to express advocacy so it is less intimidating but still instils action? Here a but a few expression that are less overwhelming:

- Informed influence
- Collective stewardship; social stewardship
- Educational Action; Education put to work
- Purposeful Voice; Purposeful Action
- Policy Shaping
- Non-Partisan, Pro-Solution
- Concern in Action
- Collaborative Change-Making
- Principled Persuasion

Beyond the headlines and the 'crisis of the week' lies the real heart of CFUW: the long game of meaningful change. Advocacy is simply the process of learning, deciding, and doing. It doesn't have to be a slog through molasses; it can be a source of shared energy and purpose. By shedding the heavy baggage of the word, we empower our members to step into their true roles—not as weary activists, but as inspired *guardians of the future*, as Women Leading Change.

[Read more](#)



---

**Thriving At Work: Prioritising Women's Mental Wellness** by  
*Mitzi Hunter, Canadian Women's Foundation*

Moderated by the Globe and Mail Generations Reporter, Ann Hui, with Shari Keen, HR and DEI advisor at The Globe and Mail, Paula Allen, TELUS Health; Harriet Ekperigin, Green Shield; and Candace Laing, Canadian Chamber of Commerce.

From extreme burnout to menopause, we explored what we can do to better support women and gender-diverse people in the workplace. I'm still reflecting on an important learning Harriet shared during our conversation: "If we're not caring for ourselves, it's very difficult for us to show up authentically and with the knowledge, skills, and wisdom to be able to support our team."

[Watch the recording now >>](#)

---

## THE LANCET

Gender equality and equity: essential for health and society  
The Lancet Editorial March 7, 2026

The terms gender, equity, and equality have been fiercely contested and increasingly instrumentalized over the past year. The Trump Administration's January 2025 orders to cease the use of the term gender in federal documents, to stop all funding that does not promote the male–female binary, and to terminate all diversity, equity, and inclusion programmes will have detrimental effects on health in the USA and abroad.

Multilateral organisations, companies, and funders—including those working in health—have become guarded about explicitly addressing issues of gender, equity, and equality. But these terms are not just academic or ideological concepts; granting everyone the same rights and opportunities while addressing the unique circumstances different genders face is vital for the health of all.

A [global study](#) published earlier this year estimated that 608 million females aged 15 years and older had ever been exposed to intimate partner violence and more than 1 billion had experienced sexual violence during childhood. . Afghanistan, where the Taliban's return to rule in 2021 has been characterised by violations of women's rights, has seen a growing [maternal health crisis](#). Since 2024, women in Afghanistan have been banned from pursuing higher education, including in all health sciences. Without trained and skilled nurses, antenatal and perinatal care deteriorate, and women's and children's lives are further endangered.

[Read More](#)

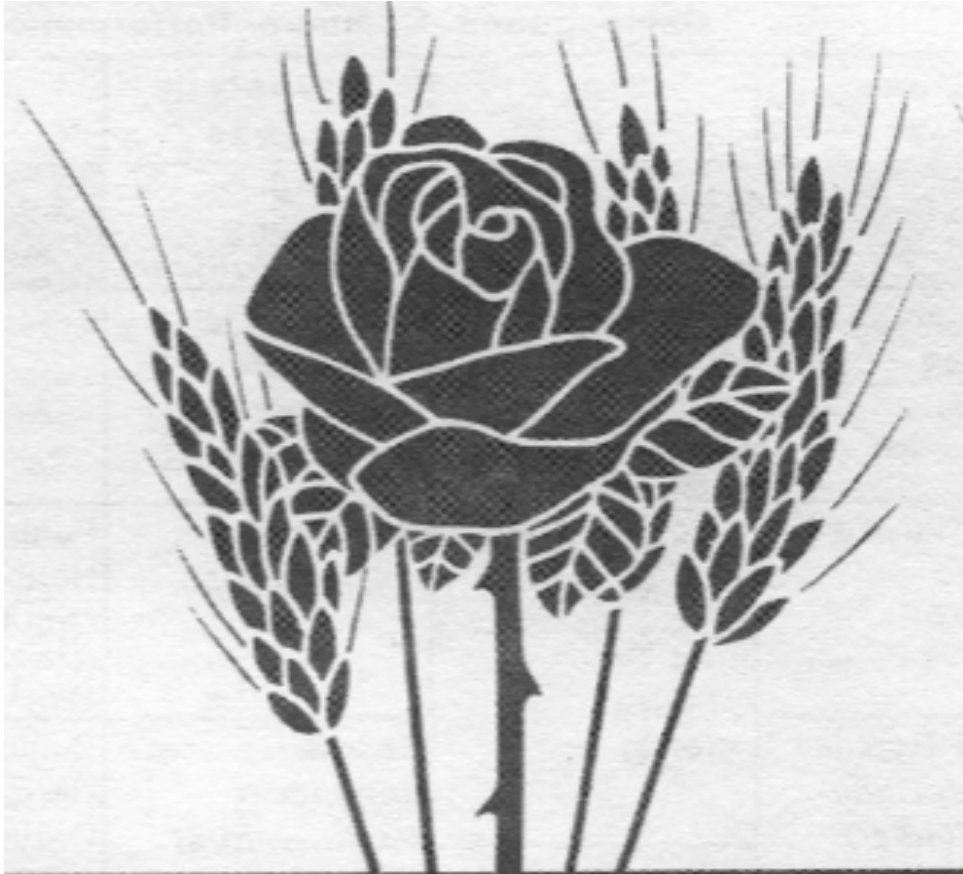
FINAL WORD

Bread and Roses

As we come marching, marching, in the beauty of the day,  
A million darkened kitchens, a thousand mill-lofts gray  
Are touched with all the radiance that sudden sun discloses  
For the people hear us singing, "Bread and Roses, Bread and Roses."

As we come marching, marching, we bring the Greater Days-  
The rising of the women means the rising of the race.  
No more the drudge and idler - ten that toil when one reposes -  
But a sharing of life's glories: Bread and Roses, Bread and Roses.

From a longer poem by *James Oppenheim*.





ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN HALTON  
awhalton01@gmail.com | awhalton.com