

generosity of members, as \$29,588.68 was received for the national voluntary fund. Congratulations to members for their generosity.

At the heart of your journey through life is that precious, sacred space known only to you and God. This deep place of encounter needs to be protected and nourished through silence, prayer and service to your brothers and sisters. May your CWL council be the source of such infinite goodness in the world!

ORGANIZATION



Lorette Noble

I would like to congratulate all members for the amazing work they have been doing to encourage, maintain and strengthen membership. Membership is crucial: without members, there is no League. At the end of June, we had 95,548 members. What can we do to reach the 100,000 mark?

When we look at the role of women in today's society, what image comes to mind? Women are increasingly working full time and some are married with children. The pursuit of efficiency and productivity at any cost in today's business world often means that if you want to hold on to and advance in your job, you are expected to work incredibly long hours, carrying your laptop wherever you go, even on holiday, which leaves very little time for family, community and social life. Our challenge in the years ahead is to look closely at what the League can offer such women and also at what demands we make on present members. We need to strike a balance between our hope and their expectations and how these may be reasonably and realistically met.

Are meetings held at times and on days that are convenient so that we are likely to attract the best attendance? If not, are we willing to try a change? Are meetings run efficiently, so that busy people do not feel overwhelmed or that they are wasting their time? Can we truly say at the end of every one of our meetings, "I learned something new today"? In other words, is what we have to offer likely to make a new member feel that belonging to the League is worthwhile? Is every one of us here convinced that joining is one of the best decisions we ever made?

We must give special care and attention to councils involved in situations where parishes are merging. We are so good at hospitality and this is where we will be called upon to help ease the transition should two councils decide to become one.

We know that our strength and one that distinguishes us from all other groups and organizations is the depth of our spirituality, which gives meaning to all our actions. In our world today, where there is so much questioning of and at the same time searching for values, our rootedness in gospel values, our shared faith, and our caring for one another are the strongest appeal we can make to Catholic women. I don't know any women of any age or circumstance who would not find this appealing.

So in our recruitment campaigns, our social justice activities, our social events and, above all, in our concern for each other, if we remember that as Catholic women we have a mission to help spread God's message of love to everyone we meet, and we know that the League offers just about the best way of doing this, we surely will be inspired to find ways of drawing other women to join us. If everyone here today goes home and invites one friend to "come and see," we will reach and even pass the 100,000 member mark.

Finally, most of you have heard that the national executive has begun looking at the standing committees and discerning whether they need to be realigned to give better direction to how the League will function in the future. An ad hoc committee was set up and, having received some feedback, a wider consultation will be conducted using focus groups, so that members have a real chance of studying the structure to see whether it still responds to our needs and reflects what is actually taking place at the different levels. This is very exciting and I encourage each and every member to participate in this exercise which will help the League to remain a dynamic and growing organization.

CHRISTIAN FAMILY LIFE



Cecile Miller

Two important issues continue to dominate the focus for the Christian family life standing committee: same-sex marriage and euthanasia and assisted suicide.

A free vote in Parliament on a motion to re-open the marriage debate has been promised for this fall. Now is the time for us to make our voices heard by contacting our members of parliament (MPs). The Catholic Organization for Life and Family (COLF) has many resources available. One that is available on the COLF website or by ordering is



Ann Doucet

The focus of the community life standing committee over the past months has been the issue of human rights. The League was represented at the 18th Annual Foreign Affairs Canada

Human Rights Consultations held in Ottawa, February 7-8, 2006.

The League commended the federal government for ratifying the United Nations *Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography* on September 14, 2005. On November 25, 2005, Canada ratified the United Nations treaty, the *Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty*.

Bill C-49 *An Act to amend the Criminal Code (trafficking in persons)* has passed through Parliament. The *Criminal Code* amendments create three new indictable offences that specifically address human trafficking.

A letter has been sent on behalf of the League to Amnesty International stating in part, that "The decision has been made to no longer support the Canadian section of Amnesty International until its position on abortion has been clarified and unequivocally revoked." Amnesty International is considering adopting abortion as a universal right in its plan to expand and develop its position on sexual and reproductive rights.

Following up on Resolution 2005.03 Protection of Farmers' Rights to Save Seed, a letter has been sent to the National Forum on Seed in response to a request for presentations to be considered at the July 2006 meeting of the Forum. This was a further opportunity to press for protection of farmers' rights to save seed.

Refugee families living in church sanctuary in Canada highlight the need to continue to press the federal government to establish the Refugee Appeal Division per Resolution 2005.05 Appeal Provision for Refused Refugee Claimants.

Contributions to the CCOOP National Voluntary Fund for the period July 1, 2005, to June 30, 2006, total \$77,468.71. CCOOP reports additional CWL gifts totaling \$13,833.72 for a grand total of \$91,302.43!

During this final year of CCOOP's three-year *Water: Life before profit!* campaign, Canadians signed 456,000 cards and declarations on water urging action by the federal government to support publicly controlled water services and provide access to clean drinking water.

The national executive continues to press the federal

a poster entitled *Saving Marriage: A Second Chance!* COLF encourages us first to pray for our MPs and then to contact them. Polls continue to show that a majority of Canadians oppose the current definition of marriage, so let our voices be heard!

Euthanasia and assisted suicide continues to be an important issue as well. There are many excellent resources available from both COLF and the Euthanasia Prevention Coalition (EPC). We can keep informed by subscribing to the EPC newsletter and reading its publications. The EPC recently published a paper *Elder Abuse, Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide: Must We Consider the Link?* The more informed we are, the better qualified we will be to defend the right of all people to a natural death.

A focus over the past two years has been ministry to seniors. Sub-committee chairperson Joleene Kemp has provided information from the kit produced by Ontario Provincial Council, *Elder Care – A Gift to be Shared!* June 15, 2006, was the first World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. It is believed that 80% of abuse or neglect of older adults is hidden or goes undetected. This violence affects between 4 and 10% of older adults in Canada. It is estimated that between 168,000 and 421,000 seniors are experiencing or have experienced abuse or neglect. These statistics are alarming and show the need for more awareness of the issue of elder abuse and its consequences.

Two working draft documents have been prepared by national office to assist in the formation of Catholic girls groups. These were adapted from guidelines developed by Hamilton Diocesan Council. It is hoped that some councils will be willing to do a pilot project by forming girls councils in their parishes using these documents. After a year, they would be expected to provide feedback – what worked, what did not work, suggestions for improvement, etc. Using these suggestions and some already received, revised guidelines will be printed. In this way, uniform guidelines would be available to any council wishing to form a Catholic girls council. If your council is interested in participating in such a project, please contact national office.

The national executive has requested that one provincial resolution from Ontario Provincial Council be addressed. The provincial resolution requests the federal government to retain and uphold the current status and wording of Sections 222 and 241 of the *Criminal Code*, a repeat of the request made in Resolution 2005.11 *Assisted Suicide – A Criminal Offence*. Members are encouraged to contact the federal government on this issue.

May Our Lady of Good Counsel continue to guide us, and may we continue to be people of hope as we strive to promote and live Christian family life values.

It was voted that national council would divide the amount in the pro-life fund (\$10,335) equally between COLF and EPC.