

# HAVE YOU TRIED...?

## A CORNUCOPIA OF SUGGESTIONS FOR 2007/08 FROM YOUR NATIONAL OFFICERS



**Cecile Miller**

National Chairperson of Spiritual Development

To start off activities under the spiritual development standing committee, I would suggest the following:

- Canada Post has a Nativity-related theme in its Christmas stamp issues for 2007. Write to Canada Post to commend it. Ask your postmaster/mistress to order these stamps. If they are available at your local postal outlet, buy them and use them on all of your Christmas mailings. As well, encourage family members and friends to buy and use them.
- In preparation for the 49<sup>th</sup> International Eucharistic Congress which will be held in Quebec City, Quebec from June 15 to 22, 2008 with the theme, *The Eucharist, gift of God for the life of the world*:
  - o Host educational workshops on the Eucharist. There are many resources available. Check out the website at [www.cei2008.ca](http://www.cei2008.ca), Pope John Paul II's encyclical letter *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (The Church and the Eucharist), Pope Benedict XVI's exhortation on the Eucharist *Sacramentum Caritatis* (Sacrament of Charity), and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.
  - o Learn more about how the Eucharist is God's gift for the life of the world.
  - o Watch for more suggestions in communiqués.
- Has your council supported the national voluntary fund for the 49<sup>th</sup> International Eucharistic congress? This fund was established at the 2006 annual national convention in Halifax, Nova Scotia to help defray some of the costs of the congress. The national executive, through the voluntary fund, hopes to sponsor the mailing of flyers with a selection of biblical texts on the Eucharist in English, French and Spanish, to every parish in Canada (550,000 of them) at a cost of \$24,000. The League crest will appear on every flyer. The congress committee will be suggesting that the flyers be distributed, especially to families with a child preparing to make his or her first communion or confirmation. Any funds donated in excess of \$24,000 will be given to the congress committee to be used for other expenses. It is hoped that all councils will contribute to the fund with as much generosity as they can afford. †

**Danielle McNeil-Hessian**

National Chairperson of Organization

Wow! How exciting it is to be beginning a new year as a member of The Catholic Women's League of Canada. As members, we have committed to doing our best "For God and Canada." Each member is called to give what she can with regard to time and talent. Your gift will not be the same as others, but all gifts are valued, large or small, and should be celebrated within councils.

In order for the League to continue to have an impact on church and society, each member needs to be an example to other women by demonstrating personal and spiritual growth enhanced through membership.

Recruiting new members and maintaining membership are very important responsibilities under this standing committee. At times, the task may seem onerous and too much to handle. This year, why not establish a membership committee in your council? The committee could consist of two to three women willing to put the extra effort into recruiting and maintaining membership. It is important not to become discouraged and not to overburden your committee with too many activities; select one or two that will work for your council.

There are many ideas that could be used by your membership committee; the possibilities are as endless as your imagination. Establish a realistic target increase for your council and encourage all members to participate in some way.

Some ideas that could be used to recruit members:

- a special invitation to an introductory session for young women, ages 16 to 19, with a focus on social justice issues at home and abroad
- personal invitations to all women new to the parish
- a League sponsored activity, such as a communion breakfast or a guest speaker on a topic of interest
- sponsored activities for young mothers

- a membership gift to RCIA candidates  
Some ideas that could be used to retain members:
- acknowledging birthdays and anniversaries
- listening to all members regarding activities for the council
- maintaining a positive attitude about the League
- recognizing the efforts of all members
- providing funds for members to attend conventions

As a retreat director once said to a group of League members when referring to their work for “For God and Canada”, “For God’s sake and the sake of the CWL, let’s get going.” †

### Ann Doucet

National Chairperson  
of Christian Family Life

Councils and members across Canada have a profound interest and concern for sanctity of life issues. Margaret Beardon, sanctity of life sub-committee chairperson, has suggested several ideas. “As most towns and cities have a Birthright or Pregnancy Crisis Centre, perhaps some of the councils could ‘adopt’ their local centre by praying for its success, contributing financially and by giving baby showers. Volunteers are always needed to help in the offices, especially if the volunteer has good computer skills. Given the demographics of parish councils, members should educate themselves on end-of-life issues such as advance directives and living wills. Younger members would also benefit from learning about these important matters so they can assist elderly relatives.”

As a follow-up to Margaret’s suggestions, I recommend parish councils view the powerful new video on euthanasia and assisted suicide, *Turning the Tide: Fighting for our Lives*, produced by the Euthanasia Prevention Coalition (EPC). The 28 minute DVD “explores the questions of why people are seeking to legalize euthanasia, the arguments related to personal autonomy and safe guards, the question of whether euthanasia puts vulnerable people at risk, and the reality of what we need to do to make a difference in our society.” A 40 minute discussion forum and a 10 minute video/quick survey may follow the viewing. Please consider joining with other parish councils to view the video. Invite members of your parish, pastors, religious education coordinators, and your local member of parliament or member of the legislative assembly. Everyone should view this video and participate in this timely and critical discussion.

DVD packages can be ordered by contacting EPC at Box 25033, London, ON, N6C 6A8 or by e-mailing info@epcc.ca or calling (877) 439-3348. Resource materials *Caring NOT Killing* and *How Will You Say Goodbye... To Someone You Love?* are also available. †

### Dr. Rayleen De Luca

National Chairperson of Community Life

When I was asked by National President Lorette Noble if I would like to be community life standing committee chairperson, my response was a resounding “yes.” I felt deeply honoured to serve, however, my later response was “What have I done? Where do I begin?” Over the years, I have learned, “When in doubt, seek a League member to help you out.” So I did. My League sisters were ready and willing to help. I was relieved when Pat Battensby, Diane Curley and Mary Ryan said “yes” when asked to serve as my sub-committee chairpersons. I now have a supportive and effective team. Please remember that when we reach out to League sisters, anything is possible and miracles can happen.

It seemed like there were so many files, topics, causes and people associated with this standing committee. I recognized that the standing committee responsibilities included (a) dignity and rights of persons; (b) social and economic justice; (c) refugees, immigration and citizenship; (d) Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace (CCODP); and, (e) developing countries.

Remember, councils just need to focus on one area at a time. It is important not to become overwhelmed. Through my work as a clinical psychologist, I see the devastating effects of child poverty on a daily basis. It is not surprising, therefore, that I identified Resolution 2004.02 Children Living in Poverty as a focus. Of course, another resolution directly associated with poverty is Resolution 2004.05 End Trafficking of Children. There have been so many projects and hours dedicated to this most worthy area. There is also no doubt that members’ efforts in these areas have contributed toward some significant positive actions taken by the federal government.

Getting started is always a challenge. A review of the community life page on [www.cwl.ca](http://www.cwl.ca) identifies many important resolutions associated with this committee; for example, Resolution 2005.03 Protection of Farmers’ Rights to Save Seed; Resolution 2005.05 Appeal Provision for Refused Refugee Claimants; Resolution 2005.06 Developing Countries and Water; Resolution 2004.03 Abuse of Residents in Long-Term Care Facilities; Resolution 2004.06 National Strategy for Suicide Prevention; and, Resolution 2003.01 Affordable Housing for Low-Income Canadians. You may decide to conduct a workshop, bring in a speaker or write letters. It doesn’t matter what the **action** is – as long as it is **ACTION**. Also, it is important to stay positive.

Remember, COMMUNITY LIFE ROCKS! †

## Mary Heinzlmeir

National Sub-committee Chairperson for Education and Health

Environmental problems such as air pollution, acid rain, toxic chemicals, water pollution and emissions have a significant effect on human health.

Air pollution not only impacts health and the environment, but also the economy as citizens focus on reducing pollution and fixing the damage caused. Monitoring changes in the environment is essential for assessing the effects of toxic substances and the efficiency of certain measures used to minimize environmental damage.

People use hundreds of chemicals every day including medicines, computers, fabrics, fuels and those used in washing, house cleaning, and tending the lawn and garden. Many toxic chemicals are discharged directly into the waterways; others enter the water from everyday use in the home, agriculture and industry. This changes the composition of the water.

Pesticides used in agriculture, forestry and homes, and polychlorinated biphenyls and pentachlorophenol (commonly known as PCBs and PCPs) found in wood preservatives are among the toxic chemicals that enter the water. Can this water continue to support society's expanding economic and social needs?

Some chemical substances occur naturally in the environment, are byproducts of chemical processes or are made deliberately for use in manufacturing.

Canadians all contribute in some way to water pollution, therefore, we have a responsibility to make some positive changes. Looking to government to enforce laws is only part of the solution.

The federal government has been doing risk assessment and management for many years and, as a result, various regulations and guidelines have been established including conducting scientific research on health and environmental issues.

The *Canadian Environmental Protection Act* is one of Canada's most important environmental laws. It covers a number of activities that can affect human health and the environment.

Recently, the federal government launched the ecoENERGY Technology Initiative for the research, development and demonstration of clean energy technologies. This initiative will accelerate the development and market-readiness of technological solutions in clean energy. The use of renewable energy must be increased, and technologies that make conventional energy cleaner must be developed.

In April 2007, the federal government launched the ecoAgriculture Biofuels Capital Initiative. This \$200 million initiative will increase renewable fuel capacity by helping agricultural producers construct or expand biofuel production facilities. This initiative is a significant step in creating new economic opportunities for the agricultural sector.

Looking to the future, will our children and future generations have a healthy environment to live in because we did our part? Are we willing to face the challenge?

### IDEAS FROM NATIONAL CHAIRPERSON OF EDUCATION AND HEALTH JUDY LEWIS:

1. Car pool whenever possible.
2. Maintain your vehicle regularly.
3. Use biodegradable cleaning products.
4. Do not idle your vehicle for more than three minutes.
5. Use cardboard or paper products instead of Styrofoam.
6. Take all out of date medicine to a pharmacy to be destroyed properly. †

## Velma Harasen

National Chairperson of Communications

The theme of the 41<sup>st</sup> World Communications Day held in 2007 was *Children and the Media: A Challenge for Education*. Pope Benedict XVI stated, "Educating children to be discriminating in their use of the media is a responsibility of parents, Church, and school. The role of parents is of primary importance. They have a right and duty to ensure the prudent use of the media...."

While we often think of media as being radio and television, it covers many other forms, such as newspapers, books, magazines, Internet, videos, CDs, DVDs, computer and telephone technology, advertising and billboards. Internet luring of children has increased. We must know and monitor that to which young people are exposed.

- Appoint two members per month to monitor all media and report their findings, good and bad, at monthly meetings. Decide on action to be taken. Commend the media when they do a good job and tell them when they have not.
- On-line libraries are universally accessible. E-mail and cellular telephones provide instant communication anywhere on the planet. To what extent will we permit these tools to lead us away from one another? Initiate a media fast – one week without television and computers. This exercise should take members away from their screens and draw their attention to their relationship and communication with God, their families, and League sisters. We cannot communicate with the Lord if we do not communicate with one another. Members cannot *Love One Another* if they do not communicate with one another.
- Include in your weekly action plan, a telephone call and/or a visit to a member or a prospective member. Let's open our hearts to listening to others and understanding them.

"Seeing with the eyes of Christ, I can give to others much more than their outward necessities; I can give them the look of love which they crave." *Deus Caritas Est* (God is Love) †

**Betty Anne Brown**  
National Chairperson of Resolutions

A “bridge” is a structure erected over a depression or an obstacle to travel and carries a continuous pathway or a roadway. Recalling the words of John the Baptist, “Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight His paths”, can you see what the League and its members are called to do?

Through resolutions, the League has the opportunity to find ways around obstacles and straighten things out for the well being of civil society.

As members grow in spirituality, God whispers ideas to them. Parish councils are a safe, small community in which to voice these new ideas. Like sparks through dry grass, they may catch fire in the hearts of League sisters.

Together, members begin to investigate, to craft a plan of action that will address what needs to be repaired, straightened and strengthened for the good of God’s people. Very clearly, members become “bridge builders”. We proceed thus:

1. Define the problem.
2. Outline the history of the problem.
3. Determine what needs to be done.
4. Determine what other people are doing about the problem.
5. Gather as much information as possible.
6. Build the case; plan the action; put the wording together.

The resolution is drafted, consulted over, revised and perfected. This winnowing process of meetings, resolution committees and conventions assists in the effort to build the best “bridge” to bring about the desired change.

Finally, League delegations transport the “bridge” to those in power and say, “Here is what 97,000 members believe will solve this dilemma, rise above this depression, go around this obstacle to make our communities, provinces and Canada a better place for all. Here is our ‘bridge!’” †

**Mary Nordick**  
National Chairperson of Legislation

L = LOVE/LEGISLATION: Legislation begins with the same letter as love; thus, League work in legislation begins with love of God and neighbour. Legislation deals with laws and government. Elected officials enact the laws under which citizens live. Citizens elect the government officials, so, in a sense, all citizens are responsible for the laws enacted. Do the laws reflect concern for our neighbours’ wellbeing? Through resolutions, the League suggests areas where legislation is needed. Proposed legislation is monitored, and members voice opposition to those that do not promote the good of all and support those that do.

E = EDUCATION/ELECTIONS: As legislation chairpersons, members, and citizens, it is our duty and privilege to become informed about what happens in government. Read the newspaper, listen to the radio, watch the news, talk to politicians, surf the Internet; become aware of the needs of the marginalized in society. Develop a critical mind. At election time, talk to candidates and encourage people to run for office. Look at the government’s record: Did it keep promises? Did it improve conditions? Was it transparent and approachable?

G = GOVERNMENT: How does the government system work? The League legislation/resolutions workshop gives a great outline. Consider using all or part of it, such as, How a Bill Becomes Law at a meeting. The federal government website is a great source of information for what the government is currently doing.

I = I: It is up to each one of us personally, “I”, not anyone else. Instead of using the excuse that legislation is boring or too difficult, try getting to know this fascinating standing committee. See what League material has to say about legislation; read the communiqués. Who knows? If you try it, you may come to like it!

S = SO WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO? I challenge every legislation chairperson or members of councils without chairpersons at every level to bring at least one item to each meeting. What can you bring? The list is endless: material from League publications, communiqués, *The Canadian League*, workshops, past and current resolutions; material from government, publications, pamphlets, a bill currently before the House; concerns such as poverty, refugees, lack of housing, cuts to literacy or palliative care.

Stay tuned for the last five letters in LEGISLATION. †

