

diocese, as the per capita fees are not sufficient to cover the operating expenses. Unfortunately, councils have had to resort to ticket sales and other raffles to meet commitments. Raising per capita fees will certainly have to be an issue, so councils are not spending valuable time and energy with fund raising ventures.

As we continue to seek opportunities to fulfill our mandate, to passionately live the theme, *Love One Another*, we will embrace our challenges as well as our accomplishments. It is our hope to gain some new momentum by offering a number of leadership workshops to the members throughout the province. †

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR



Ellen Kilfoy
Marystown, Newfoundland
and Labrador

It is a privilege to bring greetings on behalf of members in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Nine hundred and fifty members in 27 parish councils continue to persevere despite the many challenges facing their councils and communities, especially the out-migration of young people and, in particular, young families. Members are to be commended for their dedication to the League, parishes and communities.

One of my responsibilities is to encourage leadership development through the promotion of workshops. It is important to encourage members to develop their talents and skills to achieve personal growth and to help them identify and address the barriers that prevent them from accepting executive positions. The League has a responsibility to provide members with the resources they need to develop their leadership skills and to empower them to feel at ease in accepting a more involved role in the League.

One issue of significant importance to me is recruiting and maintaining membership. It is important to have new members in order to grow and flourish, but it is even more important to maintain the current membership. It is a challenge because members lead very busy lives. They have family and work commitments and sometimes find very little time for meetings. The League needs to be aware of the needs of members and strive to achieve harmony and peace in parish councils.

Spiritual development has always been a priority in parish councils. Every effort is made by members to participate in prayer services, rosaries, novenas, monthly mass, retreat days, ecumenical prayer services and fellowship evenings.

Members are active in every aspect of parish life as catechists, Eucharistic and hospitality ministers, pastoral care team members, on bereavement committees, and so on. Members need to support each other, share ideas and get together for social gatherings. They must continue to affirm the dignity of women in family, religious and single life, and to encourage women to nurture and respect their God-given gifts.

The annual provincial convention was held in St. John's. It was hosted by Mary Queen of the World Parish Council, Mount Pearl, and St. Kevin Parish Council, in the Goulds. Two hundred and four individuals attended and thoroughly enjoyed it.

The fall meeting will be held October 17-18 in Grand Falls-Windsor.

Parish councils have been encouraged to host the 2009 annual provincial convention. This will be a mini-convention because of the hosting of the annual national convention. It is also an election year for the provincial executive and members have been encouraged to offer themselves for executive positions.

Councils have celebrated anniversaries, presented service pins, and written or are in the process of writing their council histories. One member, Mary Ezekiel, was presented with the Bellelle Guerin Award. These are all signs of the dedication, commitment and passion members have for the League.

League members have a voice. It must be used to demand change to benefit those who have no voice – the unborn, homeless, aged, sick and working poor. Members are encouraged to speak out and write letters against anything that is offensive to women and families or affects the well-being of members and society in general. It is quite evident from the annual reports that members are fulfilling the Mission Statement by giving so generously of themselves and are working faithfully to build up the kingdom of God by their commitment and love for one another.

The provincial executive is grateful to life members who are providing support and advice to parish councils and to executive members. Their encouragement and support enables many to continue. They have a wealth of knowledge and experience and are committed with strong family and social values. They are deserving of admiration and respect.

Pope John Paul II wanted each local church to “find fresh heart and enthusiasm” for its mission, and this applied particularly to the apostolate of lay Catholics such as the League. He said to remember the past with gratitude, live the present with enthusiasm, and look forward to the future with confidence.

Newfoundland and Labrador Provincial Council looks forward to welcoming members to its beautiful province next August. It is a province rich with history, culture, natural resources and natural beauty. Participants may catch a glimpse of icebergs, whales, birds and wildlife. Enjoy the hiking trails, parks, historic sites, scenic driving routes, festivals, adventure tours, crafts and, of course, shopping. It has been said that

around every bend you will find a piece of heaven, a delightful sight and a playful breeze that will help your journey.

Please pray for members and their families who are sick or have lost loved ones. The provincial council especially remembers Provincial Secretary Lenora Furey, her two boys and her family. Lenora's husband, Pat, passed away Tuesday night.

May Our Lady of Good Counsel continue to shower her blessings upon League members as they work "For God and Canada". †

NOVA SCOTIA



Marian Hepditch-Littlepage
Bedford, Nova Scotia

It is my privilege to present my first report on behalf of the 5,000 plus members in Nova Scotia. Nova Scotia Provincial

Council has been successful in keeping its membership in good standing despite the amalgamating and disbanding of parish councils. We live in a world that is constantly facing changes and challenges, and the League, as part of this changing world, must expect changes and challenges as well.

The question is what can be done about these challenges? Give up and say it is a sign of the times? Or, look for new ways and ideas to make the League more relevant in today's society. Of course, it is the latter course of action and it begins by reaching out to grassroots members.

This year, grassroots members were invited to an annual provincial workshop. When this annual workshop began five years ago the idea was to open the lines of communication between provincial and diocesan counterparts. In the past three years, invitations were extended to parish council presidents and, this year, all members were invited. The response has been amazing. The goal is to provide a day of professional development and enrichment for members. The provincial executive will focus on planning for the future of the League. There is no registration fee; meals and accommodations for those travelling long distances will be provided.

The day will be divided into three sessions. The first session will begin with National President Danielle McNeil-Hessian, who will speak about her vision for the League and how members can engage and assist others in this initiative.

The second session will be a panel discussion led by life members on Promoting the League. The sessions will close with question and answer periods.

The final session will deal with the Importance of Annual Reports, Leadership and a round table discussion led by chairpersons of the various standing committees. I am very excited about this workshop because it really involves grassroots members. My goal as provincial president for the next two years is a very simple one – to personally contact and reach out to as many members as possible. I believe the way to maintain membership is by personal contact. The provincial executive's goal is to create an atmosphere of inclusion and action and to awaken the spirit within members' hearts so that their response to the social needs of others will be attractive to all Catholic women seeking fulfillment in serving in a ministry for others.

Social action is alive and well. Members are involved in all social facets – food banks, providing breakfast for children at their school and meals for the poor, supporting children in poor countries, MaterCare International and so on. The Halifax Diocesan Council raised \$2,500 during the past year to build a home for a family of five in Bangladesh. This family was living in a one room mud hut with very little food and no means of earning a living. This home will give them a whole new quality of life.

The year was filled with anticipation of the provincial council's 60th anniversary celebrated in Sydney. The celebration began on Friday evening with entertainment which included a slide show depicting bygone days, a kit and a tribute in word and song to past provincial presidents. Those members, who through the passage of time with faith and generosity led to the celebration of this milestone, were recognized. Everyone was invited to dress in 40s/50s/60s attire – dresses, gowns, hats and anything else they could find. It was a great deal of fun and everyone enjoyed it.

A provincial resolution entitled Revision to the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* was adopted at the annual provincial convention and forwarded to the national resolutions committee.

At the annual diocesan conventions the Bellelle Guerin Award was presented to members, and this award was also presented to Donna Whitehead at the nursing home by the Halifax diocesan president. Donna was dedicated to the League. She was diagnosed in January 2007 with brain cancer.

In closing, it is so very important to always have a positive attitude toward the League and the wonderful work that is done. It is so easy to look at the negatives but, if members are to encourage other women to join, focus must be kept on the positive aspects of the League. †