

and above all of friendship. And, of course, it's the 90th anniversary of our beloved League.

Anniversaries are a time of reminiscing and rejoicing, and haven't we been doing a lot of this these past three days, starting with the amazing costumes, jewellery, hats and wigs? It was marvellous that so many of us took up the challenge of decking ourselves out in the various nine decades of the League's past.

What souvenirs we will be collecting and taking back after this convention, which leads me to the topic of archives that those of us who are past presidents are responsible for in our councils. In a very short ten year's time we will be celebrating our 100th anniversary and we will be relying on our national archives to provide us with rich materials for the special centenary booklet that will surely be prepared for this significant moment in our League story.

We have a relatively new committee at national level called the archives committee which two years ago began the work of sorting through documents which had been accumulating at national office for over 15 years! These six dedicated members Marie Cameron, Lucille Cullen, Irene Lefort, Shirley Bernier, Margaret Beardon and Gertrude Nowlan, began to put these documents in order, an enormous task that is nearing completion, and for which we owe them a huge vote of thanks.

At the end of my article in last fall's *The Canadian League*, I asked if any of our members had professional expertise in archival work, and we were lucky enough to get a response from a member, Judi Cummings, who has 27 years of experience as an archivist at the Library and Archives Canada, and who has offered her services. The committee was reduced to three last year and Judi will be replacing Irene Lefort and joining Marie Cameron and Shirley Bernier when they travel to national office to continue the work of maintaining our archives.

If your provincial, diocesan or parish council is going to celebrate a special anniversary and you put something together to mark the occasion, please remember to send three copies to national office for our archives.

The other part of a past president's role is to answer questions on our *Constitution & Bylaws* (C&B) and our *National Manual of Policy and Procedure* (P&P) and to smooth things out when they don't seem to be working quite as they should. These past two years have certainly opened another door into how our League functions and looking closely at how our practice matches our policy. I have tried, as far as possible, to speak with the person who has a concern and, together, try to get to the core of the problem, where there is one. Every so often a situation arises where a very good case is made for updating our guidelines and this is when we begin a process of consultation which ends with a revision or two to the P&P. Taking such a step depends a lot on whether the situation is unique to a certain council or one that actually happens in several councils. We would not change our guidelines for every

exceptional case, but rather find a way of making things work in that particular instance.

Our C&B has stood the test of time. It is not changed lightly or often, with good reason. And our P&P is a set of guidelines intended to give more detailed ways of living out the C&B. Sometimes our policies or procedures need to be fine-tuned so that they reflect the lived reality of women in today's society.

I thought I had a pretty good idea of what is in our C&B and our P&P. What has been fascinating is discovering how others, be they council presidents or chairpersons of standing committees at any level, see and interpret these two documents. This has been a process of education for all of us. What might seem simple and straightforward in one context might not correspond to the lived experience of a council.

So, I encourage each past president to take a few minutes at each, or at least at some, of your regular meetings to have a "Did you know..." session about a section in our C&B, so that members get to know what it really says.

Sometimes a problem boils down to one member not seeing things the same way as another. So it becomes an issue of misconnection or misunderstanding between two members who don't see things eye to eye. So, somehow together we had to try and arrive at a workable solution, while remaining within and in keeping with the spirit and intent of our constitution and policy guidelines. Often this was by inviting the members concerned to meet quietly on a one-to-one basis and engage in genuine problem-solving dialogue.

Our theme of *Women of Peace and Hope* has played a crucial role in encouraging us to help one another, remembering also that we must try a little each day to learn to *Love One Another*. ✚

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS



Danielle McNeil-Hessian
Bedford, Nova Scotia

This past year has seen a tremendous amount of planning for the World Union of Catholic Women's Organization (WUCWO) 2010 Centenary Assembly being held in Jerusalem October 5th-12th.

We are very proud of WUCWO Vice-President for North America Agnes Bedard for her commitment to both the League and to WUCWO. Agnes has tirelessly promoted WUCWO to members and has made many connections through an invitation to pray for world leaders and with leaders of member organizations all over the world.

This year we have raised \$13,677 for the WUCWO National Voluntary Fund. Two requests have been sent to WUCWO asking for their audited financial statement. To date no response has been received. A letter will be going forward with the funds explaining that no funds will be forwarded in the future until an audited financial statement is received.

Members of the League have represented Canada on the WUCWO board for 26 of the last 31 years. However, for the next four years Canada will be represented by Luba Kowalchuk, past president of the Ukrainian Catholic Women's League of Canada. We wish Luba well on the board and look forward to hearing from her over the next four years.

Executive Director Kim Scammell and three members of the national executive will be attending the centenary assembly as representatives of the League. This assembly will consist of lectures by renowned speakers, visits to holy sites, discussions, and, most of all, celebrations of the Holy Eucharist and prayer.

As you have heard over the past two days, this past year saw members of the national executive travel internationally with the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and *Peace* and the Coady International Institute. The members came back enthusiastic about our participation, committed to the organizations, and certain that our contributions were improving the lives of others in the developing world.

Members are to be congratulated for their ongoing commitment to support organizations that are dedicated to improving the lives of others on the international scene, such as MaterCare International. I am confident that the League will continue to make a difference in the lives of others long into the future. May Our Lady of Good Counsel intercede for us and guide us as we go forward, striving to be *Women of Peace and Hope*. †

and National Chairperson of Community Life Mary Nordick spoke on *Hope for Africa*.

I was pleased to be able to represent our provincial membership at many of these conventions and to observe the numbers of members who attended. There may be quite a range of formality, but a consistent and keen desire to pass on knowledge and energize the members.

The *Year for Priests* was embraced as councils held various creative functions to recognize, thank and show continued support for their past and present clergy. One diocesan council got to know its priests better through a *Your Time to Shine* initiative that encouraged each spiritual advisor to speak on his call to the priesthood. In another presentation, *Called to Serve*, a deacon spoke on his journey of faith, which began later in his life as he was not baptized until the age of 50.

Over the past year councils continued to work on projects locally and internationally to support the poor. The provincial Pennies for the Poor project, which began in 2006, has generated in excess of \$35,000, all of it sent to Sister Maria Goretti in Burundi.

Councils have written letters to local, provincial and federal governments expressing their views on issues such as euthanasia, pornography and human trafficking. Members have also been made aware of the importance of organ and tissue donation.

Leadership will be a main focus in the months ahead as many councils struggle to elect an executive.

Alberta Mackenzie has seven Catholic Girls' Leagues (CGL). As I attended the diocesan conventions, I challenged each diocesan council to have at least one CGL within the next 12 months. Work on this has begun in two councils.

The diocesan councils have many reasons to be proud of the work their members accomplish. Here are a few examples:

- In the Calgary diocese, members have raised \$1.2 million for the CWL Chair for Catholic Studies at St. Mary's University College.
- Members of the Edmonton diocese support St. Benedict Chapel in downtown Edmonton by covering one month of its operational costs. Councils have also been very generous in their donations to the Cornerstone of Faith campaign for the new St. Joseph Seminary and Newman Theological College, which accommodate seminarians from across Canada.
- St. Paul diocese had exceptionally strong support for Walk for Life and members volunteered many hours at women's shelters and crisis centres.
- In Grouard McLennan, members worked closely with Catholic schools in fundraising and providing leadership. They are excited about a new summer camp program where grandmothers teach faith to their grandchildren.
- Members of Mackenzie-Fort Smith devoted large amounts of time to presentations on human trafficking given by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Native Women's Association of Canada, and Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

The provincial convention was held in Fairview, which involved some members travelling in excess of 1,200 kilometres

ALBERTA MACKENZIE



Fran Lucas
Edmonton, Alberta

Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council membership for 2009 totalled 10,057, and with the initiatives offered by national and diocesan councils, we are certain that number will grow beyond our expectations! Some inquiries are already being received for new council start-ups.

Our five diocesan councils held annual conventions with the theme of *Women of Peace and Hope*; a theme that was truly evident in their speaker choices, prayer services, and displays. The majority of the speaker topics related to euthanasia, assisted death, dignity therapy, palliative or hospice care, and forgiveness. At the Calgary convention, Bishop Fred Henry spoke on *Hope*