

spoke on the role of the League when it comes to matters of life and how we could support the group he belongs to.

The Pennies for the Poor project continues to give reason for celebrating the power of such an insignificant coin. Since the project began in September 2006 to February of this year a total of \$24,054.10 has been collected. Through our association with Sister Maria Goretti in Burundi, Africa, many orphaned children have benefitted from school and health necessities from these dollars.

The provincial resolution Proper Burial of Preborn Human Remains has been renamed Dignified Burial of Unborn Fetal Remains and was submitted to the national resolutions committee.

Goals for the provincial council include the offering of membership to every Catholic woman that members meet and then ensuring all memberships are retained. Finding an effective way to work with Catholic school boards to ensure Catholic education is not jeopardized will also be a key discussion item.

This was an election year for us and unfortunately all officer positions were not filled through this process. A plan will be set to ensure adequate training is afforded all provincial and diocesan officers so they have the desire and the confidence to let their name stand in the future.

Provincially there are six Catholic Girls Leagues which continue to flourish. The new provincial life member liaison is Lynne Persson from Devon.

Catholic Conference 2010 will be held in Edmonton in March and councils are encouraging members to participate. The theme is *Stand in the Light: Washed, Anointed, Sent*. In the past other provincial representatives have attended and we are hopeful this will happen again. Information is available on the provincial Web site. †

aging, a doctor indicated that interaction with friends provided mental stimulation – was very good for our health and for memory retention – so it appears to be a gift that keeps on giving.

I have had the wonderful privilege of attending four of six diocesan conventions and witnessing how each council has enthusiastically embraced *Women of Peace and Hope*. At the provincial convention this was enhanced by National President Danielle McNeil-Hessian's presence and workshop. In addition, Sean Murphy, from the Catholic Civil Rights League, spoke on Protection of Conscience & Religious Freedom, an insight into the emerging changes and challenges facing Christians. In a video entitled *Cutting Through the Spin on Stem Cells and Cloning*, Fr. Tad Pacholczyk examined the science and ethics of stem cell research and cloning, throwing light on the various media myths surrounding this area of science. Members appreciated the fact that it was well-prepared, informative and easy to understand. B.C. & Yukon Provincial Spiritual Advisor Fr. Tien Tran addressed prayer and worship, challenging attendees to be visible Catholics and emphasizing the importance of listening as being an important part of prayer. He also reminded attendees of the power of the mass. A trafficking presentation by two life members was followed by a particularly poignant Way of the Cross, featuring the voices of women caught in trafficking. Buttons declaring "Buying Sex is not a Sport" were distributed to everyone with a request that they speak to at least one person about trafficking while wearing the button.

Life members in the province were thrilled to announce the recipient of their first annual Arts & Cultural Award, Kaila Piller, a graduate of St. Ann's Academy in Kamloops.

In keeping with a provincial goal toward education of members, a resolutions workshop entitled *Let's Change the World* was presented at each diocesan convention. It develops a better understanding of how a resolution evolves from a concern to the final product. Members participated with a personal resolution and were then guided through the steps of writing, researching and presenting a resolution commencing at the parish council level.

The issue of trafficking of humans was threaded throughout the year. The council was once again privileged to meet with governing Liberal and opposition New Democratic Party politicians to present the 2008 resolutions and two previous resolutions still of interest, with the issue of trafficking at the Olympics at the forefront of discussion. The provincial government was commended for establishing the Office to Combat Trafficking in Persons. The minister of state for the Olympics and ActNow BC pointed out that a higher level of monitoring was needed and that hotels and restaurants have been approached to help in relation to this. It is encouraging to note that several members of the legislative assembly have spoken in the legislature on this issue. The provincial council was commended for its presentations over the last 13 years.

Our members are women of conviction and strength – prepared to accept the challenges of today, bold enough to stand

B.C. & YUKON



Marianna Caldwell
Aldergrove,
British Columbia

What a pleasure it is to be in St. John's once again and to bring greetings from the west coast of Canada. Exciting news from B.C. & Yukon Provincial Council! It is growing and having an impact. Membership increased last year to 9,400 bringing the council closer to its goal of 10,000. Through total commitment, and with encouragement, diocesan officers have nurtured parish councils on the verge of folding and welcomed two new parish councils. It has been said many times that membership in the League is a gift you give to yourself. According to a recent radio program on

up against adversity, tender and loving when needed, and strong in difficult times. At a time when Christian values are being challenged, let us continue to work diligently and pray faithfully for truth and justice. May the coming year see growth in the League all across Canada. †

MANITOBA



Susan Bernier
Lorette, Manitoba

I bring greetings on behalf of the 2,860 members in Manitoba. Prior to hosting the national convention in Manitoba last year, members of the planning committee and

provincial executive took the time to visit each parish council in the province and invite members to join us in convention. The fruits of our labours were evident by attendance at that convention and again this year as the diocesan and provincial conventions also saw an increase in attendance.

Winnipeg and St. Boniface archdiocesan councils each adopted three resolutions that were brought to the floor of the provincial convention and, following the usual healthy debate and discussion, were adopted there as well.

While the Winnipeg diocesan pre-convention meeting was underway, members were invited to participate in a workshop focusing on standing committees and the structure of the League entitled *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. Convention guest speaker Sr. Lesley Sacouman addressed delegates about the House of Peace Project “Onward and Upward” and the growing need for temporary shelter for women in transition. Familiar with the works of the League, Sr. Lesley did not ask for a specific response but left it in the hands and hearts of the delegates who responded with a call to action in the form of a resolution. At the end of a very busy two days, we bid a fond farewell to the outgoing Winnipeg diocesan executive as a new executive was installed.

St. Boniface Archdiocesan Council celebrated its 60th anniversary with a very full agenda including a guest speaker, Member of Parliament Joy Smith, who spoke with passion and conviction about Bill C-268 *An Act to amend the Criminal Code (minimum sentence for offences involving trafficking of persons under the age of eighteen years)*, and the issue of human trafficking. Member Dawn Christenson shared with delegates in word and pictures her trip to Loma Linda, El Salvador, where she carried four suitcases of over-the-counter medications donated by her League sisters in response to her simple request for assistance at the 2008 convention. Dawn has gone back to Loma Linda this year with both her daughters and has extended an invitation to her League sisters to join her in 2010.

Keewatin-The Pas members were delighted to include 11 League sisters from “down south” for a total of 33 delegates to their convention in Snow Lake in May. The pleasure was ours, though, as we truly celebrated the opportunity for a CWL road trip and a bed and breakfast that accommodated us all! With annual per capita fees of under \$800.00, the Keewatin-The Pas Diocesan Council is able to pay the expenses of only its president to attend its own diocesan convention. Her costs to attend provincial meetings and conventions are borne by the provincial council. I share this with you as a statement of fact and in appreciation of the challenges faced by parish and diocesan councils in these remote areas.

Due to the logistics, distance and cost of hosting a provincial convention in the north, Keewatin-The Pas Diocesan Council hosts one every five years, with the Winnipeg and St. Boniface councils doing “double duty” in between. The National Development Fund provided assistance by subsidizing a convention planning trip to The Pas. It consisted of four days of travel with Manitoba Provincial Spiritual Advisor Fr. Martin Bradbury at the wheel and the opportunity to meet with three of the five parish councils in the diocese.

Late May found delegates heading north by bus and looking forward to the provincial convention; this may be one of the most well-attended northern provincial conventions. Members were treated to northern hospitality as local members and their spouses provided a tour of The Pas, including a history of its churches. Archbishop Sylvain Lavoie gave delegates a taste of life in the diocese as he shared pictures and stories of his people gathered as church in celebration. The convention closed with elections and installation of a full slate of officers. With spiritual and physical needs well met, we were ready for the journey home and the rest and relaxation of summer.

This fall, the provincial council looks forward to meeting with Premier Gary Doer and members of his cabinet to present and discuss League resolutions and issues of concern.

Post-convention meetings are scheduled for both Winnipeg and St. Boniface archdiocesan councils, with members from each diocesan executive invited to attend the other. Using technology to overcome distance and expense, sisters in the northern diocese meet via teleconference for both their post-convention and winter meetings.

Ten years ago the provincial council asked how it could support members and councils in our northern diocese who felt disconnected, struggling to exist with the distance and isolation they faced. Our response has been to make the trip north to show our commitment to them by attending their diocesan conventions. The fruits of our labour of love have been not only a renewed interest by their members but an appreciation and camaraderie across all three dioceses. Members come together to share their similarities and experience their differences, truly celebrating what it means to belong to The Catholic Women’s League of Canada. †