

equipped to make this difference and have everything we need to change the world. We are **peacemakers**, healers, advocates; we offer comfort, friendship, support and love.

While there will be a full report on the meetings in Ottawa in the fall issue of *The Canadian League*, I want to give you a sense of that amazing experience. National Past President Lorette Noble, National President-elect Velma Harasen, National Chairperson of Legislation Judy Lewis and I were honoured to bring the 2008 resolutions to the federal government from March 30th to April 1st. We were really pleased with the response and feedback we encountered. Everywhere we went, our delegation was warmly welcomed and very well received. For those of you who have experienced government meetings at the provincial or territorial level, you know how important these delegations are. You have experienced the satisfaction of knowing the service you provide is relevant, important and valued. We met with senators, ministers and senior policy advisors. We were comfortably nervous but well prepared. It was an outstanding experience to represent over 96,000 members in dialogue and conversation about the concerns and issues springing up from the grassroots level.

If you have doubts about the resolutions process, I can tell you it works and it works well. Our meetings with elected representatives are a powerful witness to the value and importance of our process. When we request action through a resolution, we know the information is accurate, succinct and definite. We are confident to represent you because of the process and the assurance that what we are asking for is backed by our membership.

Resolutions that ask for something specific and achievable have a better chance for success. Dialogue with elected officials has its own difficulties and challenges as we try to stay non-partisan but focus on the business at hand. Having clarity, precision and correct form ensures understanding across all party lines.

There is no greater honour than to represent you, with your approval and support, at those tables with resolutions that define us, exemplify our concerns and demand action. It is clear that the League and its members care deeply about the poor and the vulnerable at home and abroad. We've even been called the "conscience" of politicians!

Resolutions give us credibility in the secular world and enhance our image as *Women of Peace and Hope* from parish level to the World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations, and all levels in between.

Working on a resolution, whether in the writing or taking action, should involve *faith, fun and fulfillment*. As women of faith, our focus is clear. Working together on a resolutions project is fun. And the accomplishment and achievement that results is fulfillment.

This coming year I **hope** to focus on the "Welcome, friend" part of our theme, especially through actions and advocacy in the area of human trafficking and helping women to get out of prostitution. What better way to begin than by seeing these

strangers or victims as people who need someone to befriend them or just be present to them. In addition, my goal is to keep the lines of communication open so information can flow both ways, from provincial to parish and vice versa. We can learn from one another. In cooperation with provincial chairpersons, I **hope** to enhance and clarify procedures, especially around the technical side of preparing resolutions.

And speaking of our theme: How many of you have made a personal resolution as outlined in the *CWL Day of Peace & Hope Activities Kit*? Have you seen the resolutions cards contained in the kit? This kit was designed for April 26th, but you can use it all year long. Fr. Mark Miller's talk on palliative care would be a great place to start on a personal resolution.

"They have no more wine!" Remembering who we are in God's eyes and His plan will enable us to reach out, affect change and be that advocate for others. Feminine leadership comes in the form of confidence, not necessarily self-confidence, but rather the confidence that comes from trusting in God. We cross all barriers when we extend a hand of comfort, welcome, friendship, understanding and compassion.

Resolutions: Shining our light as *Women of Peace and Hope*; how good is that? †

LEGISLATION



Judy Lewis
Summerside,
Prince Edward Island

I am delighted to be here with each of you today. For each of you present, and for those who were unable to attend, I wish to thank you for doing a great job. I received your annual reports and have great admiration for the work each of you has accomplished. Please note, any information you sent to me not included in my annual report has been reported under other standing committees.

Today, I will have completed my first year as national chairperson of legislation. I chose to submit my name for this standing committee because I felt I needed to learn about the process of legislation and how I could actively participate in this committee. Was I scared? Most definitely! Do I wish I had not been appointed to this committee? No way! I encourage each member to experience a term as a legislation standing committee chairperson.

What have I learned? Always ask for help from members who have experience in this sub-committee; sub-committee chairpersons are a valuable resource. I deeply appreciate the work and dedication of my sub-committee chairpersons –

Mary Heinzlmeir, Shirley MacDougall and Ann Devlin. You have my since thanks and appreciation.

It is very important to make personal contact with local members of parliament, senators and members of our provincial legislative assemblies. On issues of importance, each voice needs to be heard on an individual and personal basis.

The coming year will be challenging. It is vital that councils monitor what bills are before federal and provincial governments, while keeping in mind current and past resolutions.

One bill in particular before the federal government is from Member of Parliament Francine Lalonde: Bill C-384 *An Act to amend the Criminal Code (right to die with dignity)*. It has been placed on the order of precedence in the House of Commons and will be brought forward when parliament reconvenes from its summer break on September 14th. This is the third time she has introduced this bill; she introduced it during the second session of the 39th parliament and the first session of the 38th parliament.

Please read the entire bill. Encourage all parish members to write personal letters or e-mails or telephone their members of parliament with a clear, concise request to defeat the bill and to ask for a response on how they will vote. This bill is a great danger to the most vulnerable in our society.

Our first line of defence needs to be our concern for the vulnerable, our mentally and physically ill, and our accident victims. Our second line of defence is good palliative care. At the 2nd International Symposium on Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide, attendees were told how euthanasia supporters use videos of patients wandering the halls of hospitals in hospital gowns. This plays on people's fears of being helpless, abandoned and losing their dignity. Remember, silence means we agree with the action proposed even when we know the proposed action is wrong and harmful.

My goals for the coming year: to keep members aware of what bills are being introduced before the federal government that are related to current and past resolutions, keeping an eye on what will be of harm or what will benefit society; to encourage all members to contact their members of parliament, members of legislative assemblies and municipal representatives; to review the requirements for position papers in the *National Manual of Policy and Procedure* with the national chairperson of resolutions; and to encourage all members to use the *CWL Day of Peace & Hope Activities Kit* as it pertains to palliative care.

I would like to share with each of you today the excitement and the energy that I felt when I had the privilege of sharing lunch with six legislation chairpersons. The room vibrated; I could have gone on for the whole afternoon. Their enthusiasm will carry me through the coming year. ✠

LAWS



Lorette Noble
Candiac, Quebec

Most past presidents probably think that they will have a whole less League "work" to do once their term as president is over. Well, that has not exactly been my experience so far! However,

one thing is sure: there is much less pressure and fewer urgent deadlines to meet.

At the national level, as you know, there is one duty added, that of chairperson of laws, which involves being called upon from time to time to interpret the *Constitution & Bylaws* (C&B) and the *National Manual of Policy and Procedure* (P&P). And this has been a really interesting experience. The questions asked this past year show that this is a dynamic organization; we are alive and open (sometimes) to change in order to improve how we function.

Our first C&B came into existence in 1920; it was the size of our prayer leaflet, seven pages long. I imagine that questions were always asked about how does one interpret one or other of its articles and so, over time, the P&P came into existence. It gives a fuller description of how to bring the C&B to life in councils at all levels.

The challenge we face is our diversity. We are united in spirit and faith but not always in how we think things should be done! And therein lies the tale of how a national past president is kept busy. Of course every question asked reveals some interesting aspect of how League life is lived. One question posed recently was, "How much money should a council have in its treasury?" This could indicate one of two things, couldn't it? Either that particular council never has enough money to carry out its functions or it always has tons of money and the council doesn't know how to spend it. This is why it is always important and quite an education to get to the root of why a question is being asked. We learn from each other in this dialogue; it is a form of mentoring.

The most frequently asked questions revolve around holding office: who is eligible, and for how long; how to entice members to hold office; and how to encourage and make sure that those who are elected understand their role and what is expected of them. We often face an interesting dilemma, caught between those members who absolutely do not want to hold office and those who absolutely do not want to let go! Although you might think that constitutions and bylaws and policies and procedures should cover such issues, they really cannot address every single situation, except to say what