



The Catholic Women's League of Canada
Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council



**PROVINCIAL CONVENTION
COMMUNICATIONS ORAL REPORT**

Madame President,

"I had no idea that my role as Communications Chairperson was so diverse!!"

This is one of the comments that was made by a Parish Council chair while competing her online report this past year – and it wonderfully sums up what I have found over the past two years as Provincial Communications Standing Committee chair.

The rising use of technology has sparked debate of all sorts within the CWL. The online reports completed this past year are just one example of the ways technology can both make our lives easier and more complicated. I completed the reports with my parish council, and share some of your frustration with questions that did not seem to fit our council, wanting to add comments but not having a spot to put them until the end (by which time I had forgotten what exactly my comment was!). But I also had to stop and say "I did not know that this or that was part of my job" or "Wow, we need to remember about this or that for next year" – how many of you came away from completing your reports with fresh ideas, and maybe just a little bit more tech savvy? As a provincial standing committee chair I was also privileged to compile the report for Communications, with all the comments from the ladies who had completed them. More cases of Wow! Please read the full report in the annual report book.

Change is hard; change cannot be accomplished all at once. For some, change is not going to be sitting down in front of a computer themselves. Change will need to come from the ways we communicate within our councils, and between the levels of the CWL. The past two years have shown me communication needs to be a blend of the old and the new.

Last fall the provincial newsletter was completed and distributed. It was 26 full colour pages with loads of information. The newsletter was posted to the provincial website and sent out via email from Provincial to both Diocesan Presidents and Diocesan Communications Standing Committee chairs, for distribution to all Parish Presidents and Parish Communications Standing Committee chairs. Yet I received comments from members at both diocesan and parish levels that they had never seen the newsletter, did not know it was available. What became clear was that somewhere, somehow, there was a breakdown in communication. Printing and mailing a copy of this newsletter to each parish council would have cost an enormous amount of money and would have resulted in one printed copy that might or might not get shared around to members. Distribution by email should have resulted in every member with email receiving a copy in their inbox. We need to work on our "fan out chain" reliability, where each level fans out communications to their members. Yes, there are still members who are not connected, but parish councils know who they are and bear a share of the responsibility to take the time to meet the needs of those members for inclusion and information. Think of how environmentally and fiscally responsible we are being, saving funds, trees, ink – and each member can have their own copy! Provincial council makes every effort to keep councils and members informed and will mail copies of provincial documents to councils where they know that is required, but the speed and reliability of email distribution, when properly done, is unmatched.

The Communications Standing Committee is to encourage the use of media of all sorts for evangelization, to promote the League, to evaluate & promote various media for good content, to spread the word about the dangers of pornography. Media in the past was newspapers, magazines, TV shows. These days it is still those, but also so much more - social networking sites, internet browsing, e-books, texting. Communication as an action happens every day through speaking, writing, receiving of information, whether through snail mail or electronic media. We as a CWL, and most especially the executive at the parish council level, are faced with blending the new and the old – using email and social media sites to communicate, but also remembering to meet the "un-connected" members in their space by providing

paper copies of important information, articles of interest, invitations. Sometimes this requires you to take the information you receive electronically from the other levels and make that printed copy to circulate or display, so that not being computer savvy does not mean being left out or left behind.

The past few months have seen the renewal of the Alberta Mackenzie Provincial CWL website, still found at www.cwl.ab.ca but with a fresh new look and updated information. Maintenance of a website is an ongoing endeavour and I would like to acknowledge the efforts of Mary-Lou Veecken, past Webmaster and Dorothy Johansen, who has agreed to be our new Webmaster. If you have any issues with accessing information on the website, please make sure you let us know. The website will continue to evolve, so please check back often.

Please read the annual report book that you have received at this convention, and share it with other members of your council. If ever you need encouragement, just take a look back and see what has already been accomplished. Browse the display tables; there is a multitude of information for you to take back to your councils.

The Canadian League Spring 2017 edition has a very good article on the fight against pornography – “Over 18: Shining a Bright Light on a Dark Reality”. The documentary **Over 18** by Jared and Michelle Brock talks about how even very young children are becoming addicted to pornography and how easy it is for anyone to be caught in that trap with the internet today. If you haven’t already read the article, please do so.

Motion 47, introduced by MP Arnold Viersen in the spring of 2016 was passed unanimously last December. This motion (and I quote) “asks the Health Committee to examine the public health effects of the ease of access and viewing of online violent and degrading sexually explicit material on children, women, and men and report its findings to the House no later than July 2017”. This will be first time in 30 years that Parliament has studied the issue of pornography in Canada – the first study since the internet was developed. Members should continue to print the Pornography Hurts postcards and send them to government officials asking for better controls on pornography access online.

It is my understanding that speakers at the national convention will be live streamed again this year. Last year I took advantage of this option and listened to a couple speakers live. Those I missed live, I was able to view after they were posted on the national website. It was fabulous! I would love to see councils plan viewing parties – stream to someone’s big screen TV for a whole group to enjoy. Just one note – remember that the convention is in PEI, so you need to count on the time difference when planning your live screen event. Check the national website for details. And, while you are there, check out the new “**On The Spot**” feature, which has taken the place of the Be League e-magazine. Send in your council highlights and see them posted right away for CWL sisters across Canada to share.

With the demise of the Western Catholic Reporter last fall, readers are looking to other options for their catholic news. Each of the Catholic Diocese in Alberta have websites with News & Events links. You can find links to their websites and others by clicking on the Links tab at www.cwl.ab.ca

As we continue to share and communicate with members at all levels through email, we MUST be diligent about our proper email etiquette and the confidentiality of the personal information of our members, including email addresses. This cannot be stressed enough. Use of CWL membership lists, addresses and phone numbers is to be used only for CWL related communications and CWL sanctioned event information.

One member wrote “As we don’t have a chair I, as President, passed on information to members at the meetings or by email as it was sent to me. There is so much more to learn, and so much to read and view on the TV or the internet that it is hard to keep up without a dedicated chair.” And another shared “With this standing committee chair vacant, we do the best we can.”

It is good for us all to remember that this is all that the Catholic Women’s League asks of you – to do the best you can. Thank you so very much for all that you do....For God and Canada.

This concludes my report