



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



2017 ANNUAL REPORT for COMMUNICATIONS

Chairperson: Annette deBoer

Communications Standing Committee

Calgary:
Edmonton:
Grouard-McLennan:
Mackenzie-Fort Smith:
St. Paul:

Diocesan Councils Reporting: 5 of 5

Barbara Learnmont
Carmen Routhier
Donna Prevost
Theresa Hickey
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“This type of reporting is helpful to me and indicates that our council is responsible to communicate to the wider community” This comment from one of our parish communication chairs, says a lot about what the Communications Standing Committee is all about.

Annual Reports are so important for sharing the League's activities, successes and challenges with each other and with the community; the whole process is very relevant to the Communications Standing Committee at every level. As with any change, it may take a few years for the online reporting process to become comfortable. It is necessary for the Communication Chairs at every level to encourage and support our members in learning new methods of communicating within our councils – because those methods are surely set to become the norm and we really don't want to leave anyone behind.

Only 47% of councils in the province completed the online report; we must keep in mind that, while concerning that this response is so low, these numbers do not tell the whole story of League activities in our province.

The Canadian League and Be League

95% of reporting councils found that **The Canadian League** was a fair to excellent guide for their members as an educational tool, as a resource for advocacy / action, and new ideas. The articles that resonated with members were those on Hospice / Palliative Care – *CWL 12 Hours of Prayer for Palliative Care*, *The Joy of Service*, *“Keep in Touch, Get involved – Communicate”*, *Children Helping Children*, and *Not For Sale* were well read. The President's message, the Spiritual Advisor messages, information on significant birthdays, council anniversaries, and convention updates were also appreciated.

One Diocesan council noted the demise of the *Be League* e-newsletter and gave an enthusiastic thumbs up to *On The Spot* for allowing council special events to be posted quickly for national viewing.

Use of Media

63% of councils have promoted faith oriented programs to their councils; however only 10 councils promoted World Communications Day.

Catholic newspapers, periodicals, and magazines are not subscribed to by many councils; however members subscribe individually to both print and television media. *Prairie Messenger* and *The Catholic Register* are the publications most utilized. *Canadian Daily Mass.com* and *Mass for Shut Ins*, Salt and Light TV, Vision TV, ETWN all were noted as popular with councils and/or members. A number of other sites are also used to provide spiritual enrichment to members and individuals.

In the annual reports for 2016 there was significant interest noted in the prospect of the 2017 National Convention speakers being live streamed and available for viewing by councils (65.4%). In one Diocese all the councils reporting (24) said they watched some of the speakers, including the Convention Town Hall. However, this interest does not appear to have carried through as for other councils very few report watching the speakers on-line during or after the convention. Many councils indicated that they did not know that it was an available option. The Provincial Standing Committee chair did send out several notices and reminders to her Diocesan counterparts, so perhaps this was a problem with the circulation of the information from diocesan to the parish and/or within the parish. The busy summer season could also come into play.

84% of councils indicate that they have encouraged their members to visit www.cwl.ca for current information, 40% have mentioned **Facebook or Twitter** in relation to CWL.

Media Used to Promote Council Activities and Events:

Church bulletins are by far the most common means of advertising CWL meetings and events; however just over half the councils did indicate using local media to advertise their activities and events as well. Council designed promotional brochure and/or newsletters were used by many councils.

†	Church bulletins, bulletin inserts, and bulletin boards	65%-92%
†	Email reminders	71%
†	Telephone committees	61%
†	Posters	43%
†	Parish websites	35%

Where local media (mostly newspapers) are utilized by the CWL councils, it is usually to advertise events, although a number have also requested coverage of events or submitted articles to them for publishing (pictures and write-ups). Posting on social media sites has also become an option used by many councils as posting there is usually free and word spreads quickly.

Monitoring Media Content

A number of councils have not seen the CWL promotional videos, *Women on a Mission* or CWL's Testimonial Video, but did not say if this was because they were not aware of them or because they just chose not to view.

Councils are much more aware of the need to monitor media content – almost 60% said that their members have been encouraged to monitor media content. 51 councils (66%) responded to the call from National office to voice their objection to Global TV's *Mary Kills People* series.

Members are being encouraged to monitor the content of shows they watch and especially what they and their families are viewing online. One council indicated that they have discussed that people have to take responsibility for what they share between people within the council and outside of the council.

Newsletters and Bulletins

Almost 40% of respondents indicated that their council produced an annual newsletter, primarily created by either the Communications chairperson and/or the President. A few councils did say that the newsletter was a collaborative effort with executive having input as well. It was very impressive to see that 25% of the responding councils say they produce a newsletter on a monthly basis. Good job!

Newsletters were distributed through email, "snail" mail, with the parish bulletin, and handed out to parishioners in church.

Pornography Hurts Campaign

- † 5 councils reported that they attended a seminar or conference on this topic; 9 contacted agencies on their concern with child pornography issues, while 49 (63%) have read newspaper articles on the subject. 29 councils took the time to review current legislation on this important topic.
- † 60% of councils participated in the League's Pornography Hurts postcard campaign, with 20% of them mailing their postcards in the month of April. This left 40% of the councils who did not participate in this campaign in 2017.

Over 18 Documentary Campaign

Only 10% of the councils viewed and/or held information sessions on this documentary after learning about it during the spring parish council mail out. However, **Resolution 2017.02 Mandatory Age Verification Mechanisms for Adult Pornographic Websites** received more attention and action with over half the councils taking action in some way, and continuing to monitor this issue.

Note: Alberta Mackenzie Provincial council has taken the initiative with this serious issue and purchased licences for 10 showings of the Over 18 Documentary, as well as developing a postcard on this concern that is currently being circulated to councils across the province. We expect this issue to get a significantly higher exposure in 2018.

Personal Comments

Comments received from the Diocesan Communications chairs include the following:

- † The Communications Chairperson is a very important position in a CWL Council. Continue to encourage this chair to be filled.
- † Most Councils continue to keep members informed by Email, Parish Bulletin and Phoning Committees, all worthwhile venues for current issues in the Catholic Women's League.
- † Good communication fosters strong groups of faith-filled women.
- † Updating the method of communicating to the members is of importance
- † Leadership involvement is an issue that has to be dealt with in order to adequately address the needs of the councils.
- † Number of responding councils was 6; to me this is unacceptable for a diocese of 20 active parishes. Prior to the 'on-line' surveys our parish councils responded in a much higher percentage. I do miss hearing from the councils and what their activities have been from the prior year. Perhaps on-line is not the answer for us
- † We have sent letters to Jody Wilson on the issue of assisted suicide. Some of the outcomes are very difficult to understand. We are planning in our council to have one CWL member sit with a dying patient. This takes stress off family members. If we could promote palliative care in our local CWL councils will be a good start.
- † The 2017 National Convention Speakers were available for at-home viewers by live-feed on cwl.ca however few took advantage of the viewing. Perhaps we're still learning how to get the fullest use out of the internet.
- † We still need more information sharing. We need to be more vocal in expressing our concerns. Perhaps sharing a yearly list of the sitting MPs and MLAs with both email and physical addresses and their portfolios would help. Without letting the proper authorities know our objections nothing will ever change for the better.
- † E-mails are beginning to surface more often as we are increasing our use of the internet. I find using the internet is quick. It, however, takes organizing to keep all the information accessible.
- † I am continuing on for a second term as Communications chair. I started our council's first newsletter 2 years ago as I feel that communication is one of the most important aspects on keeping our council informed and feeling like a group of faith filled women. I have highlighted each month one or two members of our council in an effort to get us to know each other better. As Communication chair, I have also personally mailed out cards to each of our members, in an effort to let them know how important each member of our council is.
- † The trend will be to receive information online and with a few younger members joining our council, we feel they will be able to keep the older generation more informed.

2017 is the second year that annual reports have been completed through the online reporting system. While we expect it to take some time to fully integrate all councils into the new system, the statistics for reporting from the Alberta Mackenzie Provincial councils are rather concerning – of 158 councils province wide, only 77 submitted a report for Communications. We are not able to determine if this is because the other 81 councils do not have a Communications Standing Committee chair, or if the chair failed to submit a report.

The respondent who gave the following comment in her report did an excellent job of summing up what we all need to remember - **Trying to get an executive for a council is difficult. I hear stories and comments; "I am not educated enough to be president or treasurer." Quite often we hear "I have no clue about a computer." We wonder why positions are not filled. It's the fear and the message is not coming across – God will lead us in an understanding and spiritual way.**

It is good for us all to remember God will lead us and show us the way. We just need to trust him and say Yes when he asks...For God and Canada.