



- Resources and references
  - Communiqués
  - Resource list
  - *Handbook for Past Presidents*
- As you are digesting these documents, please note information that needs to be corrected and updated. I've found several myself. It will be the duty of the past president to:
  - be responsible for reviewing annually the council's manual of policy and procedure for any needed additions, deletions and corrections; all changes must be brought to the executive for approval before amending the manual
  - be responsible for forwarding to national office proposed revisions to the National Manual of Policy and Procedure by December 1st of each year
  - monitor/review the National Manual of Policy and Procedure and the council manual
- It is an exciting time for the League as we move ahead with planning strategically. Ours will be the duty to be responsible for the archives and history of the council. We must cherish our past. But we must also be attentive to the voices from across the country who courageously committed to change. We must be prepared to safeguard the process to ensure our Envisioned Future.
  - ***“The Catholic Women’s League of Canada is an inclusive and engaged community of Catholic Women inspired by faith.***

***It is: A vital participant in the church; A valued partner for social justice;***

***A respected advocate at all government levels; Connected to the world.”***

***(The Catholic Women’s League of Canada Plans Strategically 2018-2022)***

May God bless you as you continue your work, supporting your council and your President.

For God and Canada,

Cathy Bouchard  
 Provincial Past President  
 Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council  
 The Catholic Women's League of Canada

**"Inspired by the Spirit, Women Respond to God's Call"**

## THE CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE OF CANADA ARCHIVES

The Catholic Women's League of Canada, at every level, stores the archives and history of the council's operations. Although this task is the responsibility of the past president, it is advisable to have a committee of interested members to assist and provide continuity when the past president changes. As a broad generalization, archives are the *documents* of the council and history is the *story* of the council. Archives should contain documents that provide evidence of the good work done by the organization. History can only be written from the information and documents that have been preserved. Archives are truly a treasure, where better knowledge of the council's history can inspire it to achieve its goals.

- There are several League resources to help maintain a council's files:

- *Constitution & Bylaws* Part XII Section 7: Past President

The past president shall: ... (b) be responsible for archives and history ...

- *National Manual of Policy and Procedure* Duties of Officers and Standing Committees  
Past President – Take charge of League history and archives or appoint an interested member.

Bring scrapbook or history to some meetings for members to see.

- *Executive Handbook* Past President chapter

- *Handbook for Past Presidents* – includes

- “A Brief History of the League” (p. 1-2)

- Duties of Past President (p. 4) The past president at any level of the League shall:

b) be responsible for the archives and history of her council. If a public archives facility is used as a repository for items of historical value, the past president should identify all items in a catalogue format, retaining a copy for the council records. The history of a council is preserved through scrapbooks, photo albums and council minutes. The past president should be responsible for these important books, so members will have a permanent record of the work accomplished by their council.

- Archives section (p. 5-6)

**Tips and Tricks** for archives files:

- **SET UP the files:**

- the ultimate archival and historical records of the council are the minutes of executive and general meetings (preferably the approved and signed versions). This is why complete and accurate minutes are so important – they are the official record of the council's work.

- other key items: council charter and list of charter members, membership lists, annual reports, annual financial statement or summary, council policies, special events programs, council newsletters, significant pieces of correspondence (e.g. signed by “important” people or regarding collaborative League projects), etc. Correspondence files can contain real jewels – be sure to go through them carefully before discarding anything.

- subject files, organized alphabetically by topic (materials organized by date within each file)

- index of the files (for easy filing of incoming items and to prevent duplication)

- **GATHER:** League archives from all members, most especially the officers after every 2-year term
  
- **KEEP:**
  - anything the local council creates, and be sure to make print copies of electronic items (technology changes frequently, rendering older forms of electronic files obsolete and unreadable very quickly; paper may be old-fashioned, but it endures!)
  - photos, scrapbooks, etc. – preferably labelled with dates, events and names of people in the pictures; newspaper clippings should be photocopied to circumvent disintegration of the newsprint
  - selected information from other agencies that pertains to the work of or has content about the League or a member
  
- **DISCARD:**
  - duplicates, materials from other agencies if they have their own archives, and the accounting records (receipts, cheque stubs) that are more than 5 years old (**Do keep** annual financial statement/summary, and selected financial artifacts that could become historically significant)
  - Finally and most importantly, if in doubt, KEEP IT! One can always discard later, but the “undo” button has yet to be invented on shredders and garbage disposals.

Many councils have been in existence long enough to warrant off-site storage of older archival materials, historical documents and artifacts. In most cases, the diocese’s church/parish archives are too full (and perhaps physically unsafe) to retain League files. As an alternative, the province/territory’s provincial public archives are the best place to store council archives. Public archives are professionally managed and environmentally controlled for safe preservation of old documents, while providing good access to the materials. Generally, public archives are concerned with information (documents, photographs, “flat” things that fit on shelves), while museums want artifacts (three-dimensional items). Provincial archives are keen to boost their women’s archives to tell the feminine side of Canadian history. The Catholic Women’s League of Canada is often a very large and significant portion of the province/territory’s history and should be well-represented in public archives.

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