

UPDATE

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Leadership Conference
of Women Religious

NOVEMBER 2003

Women Religious Participate in SOA Lobby Day

LCWR Urges Congress to Close the School of the Americas

More than 100 representatives of religious communities and organizations traveled on September 23 by car, bus, bike, train, plane and Metro to walk the halls of Congress and urge their congressional representatives to close the SOA/WHISC. In more than 200 visits, participants pressed the issue in conversations which many had started in their home district. LCWR, in the person of Marie Lucey, OSF, associate director for social mission, made five visits, the responses to which ran the gamut from skepticism, to lack of knowledge, to firm support.

On the same day, many members across the country answered the call to action to phone their representatives with the same message. In addi-

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-- Jacqueline Baker, SOAW staffer*

tion, School of the Americas Watch (SOAW) received more than 100 letters from different religious orders and organizations around the world, some letters signed by more than 100 persons each, to members of Congress, voicing their solidarity with the lobbyists and with all the people of Latin America.

Representative Jim McGovern (D, MA) has pledged that a congressional vote on H.R. 1258 will



Entrance to the SOA/WHISC. Photo from the School of the Americas website.

take place during the next year. The bill calls for a repeal of the statutory authority for the Western Hemispheric Institute for Security Cooperation (successor to the SOA) in the Department of Defense and provision for the establishment of a joint congressional task force to conduct an assessment of the kind of education and training that is appropriate for the DOD to provide to military personnel of Latin American nations.

To date, there are 89 co-sponsors of the bill. The work goes on. SOAW staffer, Jacqueline Baker, stated in her report on the Lobby Day: "Of all the different organizations and actions I have been a part of, you all are the most astute, active and truly caring people I have ever encountered." Perhaps these encouraging words can be fuel for the journey.



Catholic Health Association Board Addresses Sponsorship

During the September 18-19 meeting of the Catholic Health Association (CHA) Board in St. Louis, a major agenda item was review of the draft document "Building Communion for Mission: A Theology of Sponsorship," the same text presented to LCWR members by Doris Goetemoeller, RSM at the CHA luncheon before the 2003 LCWR assembly in Detroit. The process followed with the board was the same used with LCWR members: a presentation by Doris (via telephone), text in print and on slides, facilitated discussion in small groups, followed by reporting and dialogue in large group.

While a copy of key themes from the LCWR discussion was not given to the board members until after their discussion, comments, questions, and concerns were strikingly similar. While an appreciation for the work accomplished was expressed, there was concern about overemphasis on church officials and insufficient stress on lay ministry and interfaith relationships. Board members, as well as LCWR members, want a concept of sponsorship that reflects a full range of structures and emphasized the need for dialogue and education on evolving sponsorship by all those involved in corporate Catholic health care sponsorship.

Board members also gave considerable time to discussing the current Congressional Inquiry into billing practices related to the uninsured. In addition, they focused on the proposed joint legislative proposal by the AMA and CHA addressing the issue of the uninsured, and a major CHA initiative regarding universal coverage.

Marie Lucey, OSF, associate director for social mission, represented LCWR at the meeting.

Future Issues of LCWR Newsletter to Be Sent Online

The December 2003 issue of the LCWR newsletter will be sent to all LCWR members and associates as an attachment to a World Merge message. The attachment will be sent as a PDF file that can be downloaded on your computer, and easily printed, if you desire.

The move to increasingly use electronic communications is in keeping with LCWR's goal of providing information in a timely and cost-efficient manner. Although we will be sending the next edition of the newsletter in PDF format, we may also experiment with other formats in the future to see which work best for the members, as well as for the national office.

In order to prepare to receive the newsletter, as well as other LCWR publications in the future, please check on the following:

- Does LCWR have your correct e-mail address? (We will be sending a test World Merge message to all members and associates on Monday, November 10. If you do not receive that message, you will know that we do not have your correct address. Please e-mail Eva McCrae at emccrae@lcwr.org with the correction.)
- Do you have Adobe Acrobat Reader 5.0? (This software is required in order to download and read the newsletter or any other PDF file.) If you do not have Adobe Acrobat or if you have a version below 5.0, you need to download the program to your computer. Adobe Acrobat Reader is a free program available at www.adobe.com/acrobat. Follow the directions to download or upgrade your version of Adobe Acrobat.
- Does your Internet provider "block spam"? If so, it is possible that our mailing might be interpreted as a "spam" (or unwanted advertisements sent out in large mailings.) If so, you may be contacted by your Internet provider to approve the arrival of a message from LCWR.

We will be interested in hearing feedback on how this form of communication from the national office is working for you.

National Communicators Network for Women Religious to Offer Media Training

In response to a need expressed at the August LCWR national board meeting for media training for leaders, the National Communicators Network for Women Religious (NCNWR) is preparing workshops that can be offered to LCWR members on regional levels.

The workshops will look at what can be accomplished through a positive relationship with the media and will assist leaders to prepare for and participate in a news interview.

NCNWR members will be contacting the LCWR regional chairs to discuss possibilities of offering this training to their regional members.

LCWR Offers Ongoing Formation for Leaders through 'Leading from Within Retreat'

In January 2004 the LCWR national office will send brochures advertising the new "Leading from Within Retreat" to all members.

The retreat, which will be facilitated by Regina Bechtle, SC and Nancy Schreck, OSF, will be held from January 16-21, 2005 in Winter Park, Florida. The retreat is offered as a means of providing ongoing formation on the spirituality of leadership to LCWR members.

Participation in the retreat will be limited to the first 21 LCWR national members who register. Only one person per leadership team will be selected. The retreat is particularly recommended for members who are either beginning or are in the middle of their leadership term.

Registration will open in January after the brochures are received and will close on **February 16**. Registration forms must be accompanied by the deposit requested.



LCWR Members and Staff Present at the National Communicators Network for Women Religious Annual Conference

The annual conference of the National Communicators Network of Women Religious, held in October in Pittsburgh, included presentations by two LCWR members and two LCWR national office staff members.

Marie Chin, RSM, president of the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, delivered a keynote address on "Mission, Ministry, Message and Diversity," where she addressed the need to bridge the meaning systems of different cultures. She challenged the more than 100 participants to explore how they feel, perceive and behave toward differences; how they bridge differences; and how they access the power of their creativity and imagination to be a bridge.

Jeannette Abi-Nader, HM, a member of the leadership team of the Sisters of the Humility of Mary, delivered a keynote address on "What's the Point? -- Why Spirituality Matters in a Mediated World." She noted, "I'm suggesting that we be -- not mirrors -- but prisms. I'm suggesting that we exude the inner lights, the multiple beams of grace and prophecy that our congregations are in the world. I'm suggesting that we be the POINT that makes religious life the best view of God in our world for the next seven generations."

The conference also included a panel presentation on how leaders and communicators can successfully work together. Carole Shinnick, SSND, LCWR executive director; and Annmarie Sanders, IHM, LCWR communications director, along with communication directors Liz Dossa of the Sisters of Mercy (Burlingame) and Valerie Graczyk of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Agnes, served on the panel.



LCWR Represented at National Catholic Development Conference

“Reaching for the Stars” was the theme of the 35th National Catholic Development Conference (NCDC) in Los Angeles, September 27- October 1. Suzanne Delaney, IHM, LCWR executive assistant, attended the conference as a guest and LCWR representative. NCDC assists organizations in development ministries by providing opportunities for leadership growth and networking through regional meetings and an annual conference.

The conference featured actor Joe Campanella as keynote speaker. In addition to his acting career, Mr. Campanella is well known for serving philanthropic and cultural institutions through his *pro bono* work for the Catholic Church.

Three plenary sessions were also offered. Bryan Froehle, formerly of CARA, reported research on a “Profile of Today’s American Catholic.” At a networking luncheon, Father Gregory J. Boyle, SJ, Director of Jobs for a Future and Homeboy Industries, an employment referral youth and economic development program, addressed attendees; and Paul Schervish, professor of sociology and director of Social Welfare Research Institute, spoke about his experience as a consultant and motivations for charitable giving. Throughout the conference various track levels of workshops were offered for both experienced members and newcomers to the ministry of development. “The infectious friendly spirit among conference members and the genuine interest in sharing ideas and networking made attendance at the NCDC a valuable and educational experience,” according to Suzanne.

NCDC is eager to assist congregational leaders in overseeing development efforts in their congregation and working with development directors in a professional and pastoral manner. Some of the benefits and services offered include education and training; seminars and workshops; networking and peer support; resource and audio library; advice and referrals; publications and postal/legislative bulletins. For additional information, contact NCDC at 888.TRY.NCDC (879.6232) or visit the website at www.ncdcusa.org.

LCWR Participates in Candidate Interviews and Delegation to England

The post-assembly session of the LCWR national board affirmed an intentional partnership between Call to Renewal (CTR) and LCWR. Call to Renewal is an ecumenical gathering of religious leaders focused on ending poverty through advocacy. The organization is an initiative of Jim Wallis of *Sojourners* magazine. This past June, Constance Phelps, SCL and Carole Shinnick, SSND were part of a CTR delegation meeting with White House staff and members of congress to press for legislation that supports rather than penalizes our nation’s poor persons. (See July 2003 *Update* for an account of this meeting.)

On November 24, staff members Marie Lucey, OSF and Carole Shinnick will participate in another event sponsored by Call to Renewal. The group has organized a conversation at the National Cathedral in Washington, DC with the Democratic candidates for President. President Bush has also been invited to the event.

In December 2003, Carole Shinnick will participate in another delegation of religious leaders – this time going to England. She, along with Jim Wallis and officials representing a wide variety of Christian churches, will meet with British Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown, as well as with church leaders from the United Kingdom and development agency representatives from both the United Kingdom and the United States. A major focus of the visit will be to encourage more active pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) adopted by the United Nations in 2000 intended to reduce by half the numbers of people in the world who live on less than a dollar a day.

The meetings will take place at 11 Downing Street on December 16 and 17. The Archbishop of Canterbury will be a participant, and there is a tentative appointment with Prime Minister Tony Blair. The January 2005 *Update* will include a report from the trip. Please remember the delegation in your prayers, especially during the meeting days.

From the Executive Director
**On Being a Poet
(or a Quilt-Maker)**

*Winter's elaborate gown,
Milk blue moon on the lake,
Sky dressed in shadow and storm*

Like it? Me, too. Mary Oliver? Nope – me! Don't worry – I'm not going to subject you to my amateurish poetry, but I do have a point – really.

This little ditty was composed on a refrigerator door during a visit to a friend. About 200 small magnets, each with a word on it, decorate her fridge inviting the passerby to compose a poem. Now what I learned from this (aside from the fact that Mary Oliver need not worry about me as a competitor) is that when forced to choose from a limited universe of words, and unable to reach for the tried and true phrases I would have used, I was forced to put together words I ordinarily would not juxtapose. Another example:

*Delirious puppy play –
Frantic licking all over –
Drooling sausage of fluff.*

I would never think to put “drooling sausage of fluff” together, but they were among the words available, and it sort of works. (I know, I know – get to the point!)

It made me think how often I want the optimal conditions in place before venturing out on a

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does not guarantee success or perfection.
In fact, it could guarantee mediocrity.*

project – not to mention, the best of tools and the most competent of people. However, having everything needed and wanted does not guarantee success or perfection. In fact, it could guarantee mediocrity. Somehow scarcity forces us to be more creative and innovative than does plenty.



Carole Shinnick, SSND

In her book, *Composing a Life*, anthropologist Mary Catherine Bateson tells us that women tend to “compose a life” the same way pioneer women composed a quilt – using what they had on hand, and creating the design that emerged from the fabrics available. And, of course, quilt-making was

*Somehow scarcity forces us
to be more creative and innovative
than does plenty.*

a communal experience. So these women took overalls, aprons, curtains, feedsacks and even underwear, and put together magnificent works of art that now hang in museums.

In these days of strategic planning and performance reviews, it may be good for us to remember that when women undertake a project or a task, they also need the creativity that comes from scarcity. From a limited universe of words (or personnel or finances or energy) we just might find that we are forced to transcend those very limitations to create something imaginative and truly new that could never have been born in plenty. Long-range strategic planning is great, but we are also quilt-makers at heart. So, go out and play like a delirious puppy. You'll be amazed how much you'll get done.

Change of Dates for LCWR Systemic Change Think Tank

The LCWR Systemic Change Think Tank will take place February 8-10, 2004. (Please note that this is a change from the previously published dates.)

Margaret Galiardi, OP, who helped inaugurate the "Think Tank" several years ago, will be facilitator and will focus on "Planting Another Row: Change Giving Birth to Life." Margaret is presently a staff member for ecological concerns at Siena Spirituality Center in Watermill, NY.

The workshop begins Sunday evening at dinner and ends on Tuesday at lunch.

The registration brochure for this event will be sent during the week of October 20 as a PDF attachment to an LCWR World Merge message. (Directions for downloading PDF documents are found on page 2 of this edition of *Update*.) Questions regarding the event may be directed to Marie Lucey, OSF at mlucey@lcwr.org.

Legal Resource Center for Religious Welcomes New Staff Member

The Legal Resource Center for Religious welcomes Pat Nash to its staff as administrative assistant. Pat was the database manager at LCWR in the late 1990s. After a short break from the Cameron Street building, she has come back to assume her new role.

She will be the first contact for many LRRC subscribers who e-mail or call for information or assistance, offering help herself or referring requests to staff attorneys for follow-up. Pat is also playing a major role in the organizational details of the Legal Seminar to be held in Denver, CO, March 11-14, 2004.

Upcoming Dates

LCWR Systemic Change Think Tank
Tampa, Florida
February 8-10, 2004

LCWR New Leader Workshop
Mundelein, Illinois
March 25-28, 2004

LCWR/CMSM Joint Assembly
Fort Worth, Texas
August 19 -- 23, 2004
(please note the change in date from previous listings in Update)

LCWR Leading from Within Retreat
Winter Park, Florida
January 16-21, 2005

LCWR Assembly
Anaheim, California
August 19 -- 23, 2005

LCWR Assembly
Atlanta, Georgia
August 18 -- 22, 2006



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