

January 2006

Thousands Gather at WHINSEC/SOA Pax Christi USA Honors Prophetic Witness of Women Religious

Once again many women religious joined the large gathering at the gates of Fort Benning, Georgia, November 18-20, to call for the closure of the School of the Americas (now Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation), renamed but not transformed. This year 16,000 women, men and children prayed, sang, walked in silent procession, and listened to testimonies of people who had fled El Salvador, Guatemala, Colombia, Honduras, and Peru to escape the violence carried out by their military and para-military forces trained at the SOA. About 40 men and women were arrested after crossing the line by crawling under and over wire fencing.

The protest that began with just a few people in 1989 was the largest ever this year, with college and high school students and other young people counting for at least half the participants. Many of the young people participated in the Jesuit teach-in conducted on the first two days of the event. While the program focused primarily on the need to close the school, there were also calls for withdrawal from Iraq, an end to use of torture by US officials, protection of immigrants, and a national budget that provides for the needs of the most vulnerable people in society. Participants clearly saw

(continued on page 5)

Inside this issue:

- 3 Religious Formation Conference Honors LCWR for its 50th Anniversary
- 3 Support LCWR Scholarship Fund and Save the Environment
- 6 President Represents LCWR at USCCB International Policy Committee Meeting



Many women religious, including LCWR members, gathered at Fort Benning, Georgia

Delegation to El Salvador Remembers, Celebrates, Renews Commitment

The SHARE/LCWR delegation to El Salvador November 30 to December 6 was a not-to-be-forgotten experience for the 70 women religious and 40 others who joined them, including SHARE staff. The delegation was well organized, with the large number divided into small groups of about 12 who shared the same visits out in the communities and evening reflections on the day's experience. LCWR members will share their experience with region and community members.

Some of the highlights of the trip included:

- a visit to the Memorial Wall bearing the names of about 25,000 of the 75,000

(continued on page 4)



From the LCWR Presidency

Stirring Hope Alive in Our Hearts

by Christine Vladimiroff, OSB -- LCWR Past President

In a Benedictine monastery, at the end of the Liturgy of the Hours the prioress gives the community a blessing. I have no recall when the custom started in this monastery of bringing our calendars for the new year to Morning Praise on January 1. On New Year's morning we include in that blessing a blessing of the calendars. It is an act that embodies our hope that we, as a community, want to be and desire to bring blessings to the days ahead. This hope is the link between our present and our future. It is a communal venture to move into the promise with renewed energy.



Despair is easy. I remind myself as I struggle to balance the community budget for the new fiscal year, and as I look at the capital needs of an aging monastery building. We can all make long lists of what is not working in our life, in our church, in religious life itself. Hope is what will keep us on the journey moving ever forward. Traces of hope will be found each time we take the next step to cross a frontier and to meet the challenge facing us. Hope is the habit of the heart that is marked by realism, courage, patience and willingness to embrace difficulties. Marcel wrote, "Hope is the memory of the future."

Ladislaw Orsy, SJ in his Advent articles on hope in *America* magazine wrote: "We live as long as we hope; we live as much as we hope. Loss of hope is a loss of life." I tested out the truth of the statement. As I look out at a world mired in war and violence, do I cherish a promise of a new way of living where "war will be no more"? As I experience the Church falling short of the inclusive love that Jesus taught, do I cling to the surety that God's spirit is the energy, the grace for conversion? As we undertake the task to look at religious life in our time as a conference or our own congregation's future,

Our life is as large as our hope. We must nurture it with God's word in Scripture and in our times of silence and solitude allowing God to speak to us. When we

Together we can forge a future for religious life worthy of the past that our foremothers achieved.

As we undertake the task to look at religious life in our time as a conference or our own congregation's future, do we see possibilities or do we only see limitations?

gather in our communities and when we gather as a conference we must stir the hope alive in our hearts. Together we can forge a future for religious life worthy of the past that our foremothers achieved.

A few lines of a poem by Canadian poet, Minnie Louis Haskins, (1908) capture my feelings as I bless the calendars this new year.

do we see possibilities or do we only see limitations? How convinced are we that there will be a "new heaven and a new earth"? Hope is based upon a promise, the promise of God, a promise that says that — human sin and failings notwithstanding — justice, peace, love, and harmony will gradually become our reality.

"The Gate of the Year"
 I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year
 "Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown"
 And he replied, "Go into the darkness and put your Hand into the hand of God
 That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way!"

RFC Pays Tribute to LCWR at its 2005 Congress



RFC executive director Janet Mock, CSJ and Carole Shinnick, SSND with the framed calligraphy that had been presented at the recent RFC congress.

At its 2005 congress in San Antonio in November, the Religious Formation Conference gave special recognition to both LCWR and the Conference of Major Superiors of Men on the occasion of their 50th anniversaries.

In accepting the honor for LCWR, executive director Carole Shinnick, SSND said in part,

"LCWR owes a great deal to RFC. The same entity that gave birth to RFC – the Sisters Formation Conference – also generated the Council of Major Superiors of Women, which eventually became the Leadership Conference of Women Religious.

"LCWR continues to owe a great deal to RFC. Without new members and without well-prepared, professional persons like you to mentor them, leadership would soon lose direction and meaning. Your service to your individual communities and to religious life is both precious and irreplaceable.

"It is not an easy time to serve in leadership - and I suspect it is not an easy time to serve in the ministry of formation. The milestones with which we used to measure progress and success have evaporated and the

horizon towards which we walk together is veiled in fog. Without our familiar landmarks, we certainly have less security, less clarity. But our losses are coupled with an unexpected gift – the opportunity to redefine the journey itself. And – most definitely - we need each other – for support, encouragement, and for the necessary unleashing of each others' wild and graced imaginations.

"So, in the name of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, I thank you for this special recognition tonight -- and even more, for your dear companionship. Thank you very much."



Support the LCWR Scholarship Fund by Recycling Ink Cartridges

Number of Entities Participating in Program
LCWR, CMSM, RFC, NATRI, LRCR
and 10 LCWR Member Congregations

**Amount of Money Received into
LCWR Scholarship Fund**
(From September 1 - November 30, 2005)
\$217.49

Congregations are asked to consider participating in this program and inviting other entities to do so as well.
Other possibilities are health systems, universities, schools, and other works.

Participation in the program is easy and has no costs. Recyclable items include: ink jet cartridges, laser cartridges and cell phones. More information is on the LCWR website at:
<http://www.lcwr.org/lcwrsocialjustice/recycling.htm>

Delegation to El Salvador Remembers, Celebrates, Renews Commitment

(continued from page 1)

- people killed and disappeared during the darkest days of the war in El Salvador
- a visit to the chapel where Archbishop Oscar Romero was killed
- a visit to the University of Central America where six Jesuits and their two women companions were murdered
- a visit to the site where Dorothy Kazel, OSU; Jean Donovan; Maura Clarke, MM; and Ita Ford, MM were raped and murdered.
- a visit to several communities in El Salvador threatened by poverty but alive with hope
- a press conference which included the reading of an LCWR press statement in English and Spanish
- a reception in honor of former Senator George McGovern and Representative Jim McGovern of Massachusetts
- a meeting with US Ambassador H. Douglas Barclay and staff at the US embassy
- a special liturgy commemorating the lives of the women martyrs held in the crypt of the cathedral where Archbishop Romero is buried

More information as well as photos of these activities are available in the What's New section of the LCWR website at: <http://www.lcwr.org/what%27snew/salvador.htm>

According to Marie Lucey, OSF, LCWR associate director for social mission and one of the coordinators of the delegation, "The return home for many was a jolting transition from warmth and color to cold and snow, and for all a disconcerting transition from poverty to Christmas shopping abundance and carols that have nothing to do with the Feast. Participation in this delegation was a rare opportunity and privilege which in the words of Dean Brackley, SJ, "broke the hearts" of participants who continued their Advent and Christmas journeys accompanied by people who give hope an enriched meaning."

Memorial to the four US churchwomen at the site where they were raped and killed



Memorial Wall with names of persons disappeared and murdered



Press conference in San Salvador



Pax Christi USA Honors Prophetic Witness of Women Religious

(continued from page 1)

the connections among these issues. Special honor was also paid to the four North American church women who were killed by order of SOA graduates on December 2, 1980.

During its gathering on the night of November 18, Pax Christi USA also honored the lives of Dorothy Kazel, OSU; Jean Donovan; Maura Clark, MM; and Ita Ford, MM as the 25th anniversary of their martyrdom was celebrated through prayer and a panel of three sisters (Suzanne Moore, MM; Magdala Thompson, RSM; and Judith Hilbing, OP) who spoke to the continuing prophetic presence of women religious today. Because LCWR is the organization that represents most US women religious, Pax Christi USA also presented to LCWR an award titled "The Prophetic Presence of Women Religious." As Marie Lucey, OSF, LCWR associate director for social mission, accepted the award on behalf of LCWR, the packed room was on its feet with sustained applause.

In thanking Pax Christi for this special award, Marie referred to the great women in religious congregations, from founders to builders to those who continue to work today with lay partners for the transformation of society into one that resembles the Gospel vision of social, economic, and ecological justice, and thus, a world of peace. She assured the assembly that LCWR accepts both the award and the challenge it represents with gratitude and commitment. The full text of her remarks are available on the Pax Christi USA website at: http://www.paxchristiusa.org/news_events_more.asp?id=600



Marie Lucey, OSF (at podium) accepts the Pax Christi Award on behalf of LCWR

Pax Christi Award The Prophetic Presence of Women Religious

The following is the introduction to the award presentation as well as the text of the award given to LCWR

Pax Christi USA's hope for tonight was to honor all women religious who bring a prophetic witness--like all of you here at the SOA. It's women religious who have been and remain the backbone of the Pax Christi movement in the U.S. So we were looking for a humble gesture to say "thank you." In particular we want to express that gratitude and admiration to the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR), both because it is the body representing the 71,000 Catholic sisters, and also because LCWR has been particularly effective in its national role in speaking truth to power—on issues ranging from the war in Iraq, torture, nuclear weapons, debt, Haiti, and many more. LCWR also promotes and lives out a model of ecclesial collaboration that makes working with LCWR a pure gift.

In commemorating the 25th anniversary of the martyrdom of the U.S. Churchwomen in El Salvador

Pax Christi USA offers this certificate of profound gratitude

- to women religious, and in particular,
- to the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR)

for carrying forward the legacy of passionate commitment

- to defending the cause of the most vulnerable
- to courageously speaking truth to power
- to living out gospel nonviolence in a broken world.

You consistently have been at the forefront of change and your prophetic witness represents our Church at its best. You keep the embers of hope alive in these urgent times.

For your leadership, collaboration and inspiration, Pax Christi USA is profoundly grateful.

LCWR Represented at USCCB International Policy Committee Meeting

LCWR president Beatrice Eichten, OSF represents LCWR at the USCCB International Policy Committee (IPC) meeting and at the joint meeting of the IPC and the USCCB Domestic Policy Committee. Both committees, which meet twice a year, serve the USCCB Department of Social Development and World Peace (SDWP).

The December IPC meeting focused on policy positions and strategies to assist movements towards justice and peace. Through linkages with the Commission of the Bishops Conference of the European Community, the Peacebuilding Network, and Catholic Relief Services, to name a few, the USCCB Department for Social Development and World Peace (SDWP) seeks to support and extend efforts towards peace and respect for human rights around the world. Using the approach of asking key questions, the SDWP supports “responsible transition” towards the rule of law in Iraq, and addresses the treatment of prisoners. They co-sponsored a colloquium on the Ethics of War after 9/11 with Georgetown and Notre Dame Universities. The SDWP engages in ongoing dialog between Jewish, Muslim and Christian leaders in the US and internationally, calling for renewed efforts by the US to promote peace with justice in Israel/Palestine. They reported on work underway in Cuba/Venezuela, Africa, Kosovo/Bosnia, and Haiti. They have engaged in significant legislative advocacy in the United States, and Cardinal Theodore McCarrick and John Carr, Secretary for SDWP, had a conversation with President Bush, asking that he ensure that poor people benefit from the Doha Round of World Trade Organization negotiations.

The USCCB Domestic Policy Committee, through many initiatives and linkages with other organizations, focuses on trade policies and subsidized agri-business to address their impact on poverty and migration. The committee looked at how to strengthen education of Catholics on the church’s social teaching and its application in the political arena. The plan is to rework the document Faithful Citizenship and to reissue it earlier so it does not get tangled in the next election cycle. Eileen Claussen, president of the Pew Center for Global

Climate Change, gave a presentation on the significant evidence of climate change and the need to reduce greenhouse gas emission. The committee approved a strong commitment by SDWP to work with legislators and the administration to mitigate global climate change and to advocate for assistance to developing countries to help them find effective ways to address global climate warming.

The depth of expertise, commitment and professionalism in the committees and in the staff of the SDWP is impressive, offering a strong voice for ethical and just treatment of all persons, especially those who are poor. It is a significant expression of the church living the Gospel through moral and ethical critique of social systems that diminish every person’s right to respect and human dignity. It truly extends hands around the world.

Upcoming LCWR Dates

LCWR Leading from Within Retreat

*Mater Dolorosa Passionist Retreat Center
Sierra Madre, California
January 15 -- 20, 2006*

LCWR Systemic Change Think Tank,

*Franciscan Center -- Tampa, Florida
February 12 -- 14, 2006*

LCWR New Leader Workshop

*St. Mary of the Lake -- Mundelein, Illinois
March 30 -- April 2, 2006*

LCWR Assembly

*Atlanta, Georgia
August 18 -- 22, 2006*

LCWR Assembly

*New Orleans, Louisiana
August 2 -- 6, 2007*

LCWR Mourns Passing of Former President Helen Flaherty, SC

Helen Flaherty, SC, the 1982 LCWR president, died on December 12 in Mount St. Joseph, Ohio at the age of 85. She was the former president of the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati and the first female vicar for religious of the Denver archdiocese.



She entered her congregation in 1940 and served in various ministries as an educator, school administrator, congregation formation director and vocation director, and college campus minister and dean of students before being elected provincial of her congregation's Detroit province in 1969. In 1974 she became the associate vicar for religious for the Denver archdiocese and later became vicar. At that time, there were only four other female vicars for religious in the United States. She participated in the National Vicars' Conference and was elected secretary of the organization.

In 1979 she was elected president of the Sisters of Charity. During her eight-year tenure, she was elected a national delegate to the General Council of the International Superiors General in Rome, and participated in a 12-member group of ecumenical church women who visited Beirut, Lebanon to study the effects of war on children.

When Helen served as LCWR president, the conference's members represented 130,000 women religious in the United States. She said of LCWR, "We try to give lots of inspiration and motivation to the women of the church of the United States in their role as witness for justice, for charity, for some kind of prophetic role, criticizing when necessary, asking God questions, serving the poor."

NATRI Conference Addresses Mission

Approximately 580 NATRI members and 250 exhibitors attended the 2005 NATRI conference in Houston in October. Hurricane Rita preceded the arrival of attendees by two weeks, but Houston was fully functional and anxious to greet them.

The theme of this year's gathering was "Time, Talent, Treasure, Tradition, and Transition for Mission." The conference provided an opportunity to focus on the convergence of finance and development efforts through both the keynote address by Rev. Manuel Williams and breakout sessions. On Saturday morning Dr. Robert Wicks presented an engaging and eloquent address on the topic of "Living a Gentle, Caring Life." He encouraged the attendees to not be seduced by the expectations of those around them, which creates secondary stress and leads to burnout. He spoke of standing as friend to one's darkness to find what matters most, so that one can learn from the present to make the future better.

Among conference attendees there was heightened interest in the numerous presentations on Medicare and Social Security benefits. NATRI has been working diligently to advise congregations on the implications of the Medicare Prescription Drug Improvement and Modernization Act. The new Medicare prescription drug program is slated to take effect on January 1, 2006 and will have implications for all seniors, including those in religious communities.

NATRI recently updated its popular forecasting tool, TRENDS. This useful computer program can be used by communities to develop demographic and cash flow projections and retirement needs analysis. Attendees had the opportunity to get acquainted with the new features in the just-released version 3.

Audiotapes and compact disks of the conference presentations are available for purchase through GEM Tapes. An order form, as well as materials from the various workshops, is available through the NATRI website at www.natri.org under "Programs."

From the LCWR Executive Director

Guns and Butter

Quite a few years ago I came across a disturbing story in the newspaper. It concerned an event in a small neighborhood of a declining mid-west city. Most of the residents were life-long neighbors who had aged as the area diminished and who had chosen to stay where they had lived most of their lives. Generally, they survived on small pensions and social security income. Because the neighborhood was also a high crime area, the residents developed an informal reassurance network. They watched each other's comings and goings, and checked on persons they had not seen or heard from for a few days.



Carole Shinnick, SSND

One day the neighbors noticed that an elderly gentleman from the area had not been out in a long time. He was a bit of a curmudgeon and rather snappish with his neighbors. Since he seemed to prefer keeping to himself, his neighbors were initially unconcerned about his absence. And they were also a little fearful of bothering him. But when the days stretched into a week, they became worried and some of them decided to ring his doorbell. No answer. They called him on the phone. No answer. Finally they called the police.

The police had a terrible time breaking into his home. The doors were protected with multiple bolts, bars, and padlocks. When they were able to get into the modest flat, they found the old man dead at his kitchen table, a shotgun across his knees. He had not died from a self-inflicted wound. He had not died from intrusion or attack. He had died from starvation.

The police found that his refrigerator was empty and the only things in the cupboard were boxes of shells for his shotgun. It seemed he was so fearful that his home would be burglarized or that he himself would be attacked, he had spent all of his meager income on locks, bolts and weapons.

I remember this story often and from a variety of perspectives. It certainly comes to mind as I watch our country pouring obscene amounts of money into defense of all kinds – Homeland Security, surveillance and spy operations, clandestine prisons where unspeakable things happen and cave-busting missiles - while

budgets for social services, medical care, education, and supplemental food programs are slashed. I think about the likelihood that our country is headed in the same direction as the old man – becoming more and more isolated, barricaded and feared, while our neediest citizens starve.

I also think of the implications of this story on the micro-level – this “micro” to be exact. I am aware of how all-consuming and exhausting it is when I go into my own self-protective mode – fearful of

hurt, refusing to take risks, being stingy with my heart. This behavior often follows an unexpected injury, an unanticipated set-back. I seem to have my own personal Department of Defense. I guess we all do. That's not necessarily a bad thing unless the Department of Defense goes into overdrive and begins to consume the resources needed by other departments – the Departments of Art, Delight, Friendship, Humor - and of course, the Department of Energy. Then I'm in trouble.

Having taken yet another look at my tired list of New Year's resolutions – poor neglected things that they are – I think I may focus this year on disarmament. Some disarming behaviors are pretty simple, though not

I like to think that these small efforts at disarmament could have a ripple effect on worldwide arms build-up and violence. Maybe they do.

necessarily easy. Laughing is one. (Try clenching your fists and laughing hard – you can't!) Doing something even if it's not done perfectly is another. (This could be my year to dance!) And then there are those magically disarming phrases – “You're right.” “I was wrong.” “You've got a good point.” “I never thought of that.” “I'm sorry.”

I like to think that these small efforts at disarmament could have a ripple effect on worldwide arms build-up and violence. Maybe they do. Now, *that* would be a resolution worth keeping.

FROM THE
CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF
RELIGIOUS LIFE

CSRL Offers Interdisciplinary Forum on the Individual and the Common Good

On March 5-8, 2006 men and women religious in various forms of leadership within congregations will gather with scholars to reflect on "The Individual and the Common Good." The first in a series of three interdisciplinary forums on the topic will be held at King's House Retreat and Renewal Center in Belleville, IL (St. Louis area). Registration begins at 1 p.m. on Sunday, March 5 with the first session at 3:30 p.m. It ends with lunch on Wednesday, March 8. The other forums on the same topic will be:

September 24-27, 2006

Bishop Malloy Retreat House, Jamaica, NY
(New York City area)

April 15-18, 2007

El Retiro San Inigo Retreat House, Los Altos, CA
(San Francisco Bay area)

Within the interdisciplinary forum the participants and panel of six scholars will use three case studies looking at the tensions between the good of the individual and the good of the group to focus the discussion. Participants will have the opportunity to discuss the cases within small groups as well as with the scholars. Scholars for the first interdisciplinary forum are:

Jean Bartunek, RSCJ

Professor of Organization Studies, Boston College

Raymond Dlugos, OSA

Chief Executive Officer, Southdown Institute
PhD in Counseling Psychology

Paul Hennessy, CFC

President and Professor of Theology
Edmund Rice School for Pastoral Ministry

James Herring, O. Praem.

Prior, St. Norbert Abbey, DePere, WI
Judge, Tribunal of Diocese of Green Bay

Mary Johnson, SNDdeN

Professor of Sociology and Religious Studies
Emmanuel College, Boston

Karen Kennelly, CSJ

Congregational Leadership Team Member
PhD in History

Information and a registration form are available at www.religious-life.org. For further information, contact Virginia Piecuch at vpiecuch@visioni.com.

Legal Resource Center for Religious Offers Three Regional Workshops

Instead of one annual legal seminar, LRCR is planning three regional workshops.

February 23–24, 2006

Denver, CO

Membership Issues: Canonical, Civil & Psychological

Particular Interest to: Leadership and Council Members

March 7–8, 2006

St. Louis, MO

Civil & Canonical Structure of Institutes & Ministries

*Particular Interest to: Leadership, Treasurers,
Attorneys & Board Members*

March 23–24, 2006

Silver Spring, MD

The Institute and Ministries as Employers;

Members as Employees

*Particular Interest to: Leadership, Treasurers,
Attorneys and HR Directors*

First Day 12:00 – 5:00 pm

Second Day 9:00 – 3:00 pm

Workshop Fee: Registration	\$ 295 each
Hotel Rate: Marriott Denver Tech Center	\$ 95 plus tax
Hilton St. Louis Airport	\$100 plus tax
Hilton Silver Spring	\$129 plus tax

See the LRCR website www.lrcr.org
for additional information

Call 301-589-8143 or e-mail njefferies@lrcr.org

NRVC Update

New NRVC Website Premiers

After months in the making, NRVC is proud to announce the premiere of its newly revised website (www.nrvc.net). Consistent with the goal of improving its technology as outlined in its five-year strategic plan, the website is more user-friendly and will greatly improve NRVC's communication with members as well as their communication with one another. With many new features, which includes a "members only" section, the website now provides past issues of *Horizon*, archived newsletters, the NRVC membership directory (with a search feature), a keyword area for finding articles, and a revised format for the NRVC newsletter. Although some of the website is still under construction, future highlights will include on-line registration for workshops, bulletin boards for committee members, and discussion areas for members.

NRVC Establishes Ethics Committee

The NRVC national board approved the establishment of a committee to revise its present Code of Ethics for Vocation Directors. In light of recent events in the church, it is necessary to expand its focus to include appropriate behaviors and issues boundaries. The following people have agreed to be part of this committee:

- Rev. Thomas Nairn, OFM, *Professor of Catholic Ethics, Director of Health Care Mission Leadership, Catholic Theological Union, Chicago;*
- Ms. Jennifer Read, *Executive Director of Pathways to Hope, Chicago;*
- Sister Gilmery Bauer, RSM, *Ethicist and Regional Community President, Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, Detroit, MI;*
- Sister Teri Wall, OP, *Vocation Minister, Great Bend Dominican Sisters, and NRVC National Board;*
- Dr. Monica Applegate, PhD, *President, Praesidium, Inc., Arlington, TX.*

Rev. Raymond Carey, PhD has agreed to serve as a consultant. Once the work of the committee is completed, the new Code of Ethics will be distributed to all NRVC members.

NRVC Visits with the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life

Recently NRVC executive director Paul Bednarczyk, CSC met in Rome with representatives from the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life to report on the work of NRVC. Explaining that NRVC's five-year strategic plan was a direct response to the directives of the Pastoral Plan of the North American Congress on Vocations, Paul outlined the efforts and recent initiatives of NRVC in promoting a culture of vocation in North America and beyond.

Gratitude was expressed for the work of NRVC with the three leadership conferences, its collaboration with other church organizations in the area of vocation promotion, and the individual work of all vocation directors.



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Editor: Annmarie Sanders, IHM

8808 Cameron Street -- Silver Spring, MD 20910

Phone: 301-588-4955 Fax: 301-587-4575

E-mail: asanders@lcwr.org. Website: www.lcwr.org