



# What Do We Do Now?

## AGM Address

By **Dan Tighe**, *President-elect*

One of the most memorable movie quotes in history comes at the end of the 1972 drama, *The Candidate*. New senator, Bill McKay, played by Robert Redford, asks with some degree of trepidation, “What do we do now?” I cannot help but wonder if our early presidents, Jim Bryne and Marny Beale, faced with the unfolding realities of Bill 160, did not ask themselves that very question. We now know that they found their answer in our charter goals, namely:

- To represent and assist Catholic principals and vice-principals to maintain and improve terms and conditions of employment.
- To advance the cause of Catholic education.

What do we do now? Earlier this year, I was honoured by The Learning Partnership as one of Canada’s Outstanding Principals. In my press release, I noted that accolades bestowed upon us as educators are, in reality, seldom about one person or one event but rather in recognition of a body of work by a large supporting cast. What Redford missed, that Jim and Marny clearly understood, was that the answer is contained within the question. Redford did not ask, “What do I do now?” but rather “What do we do now?” Past presidents have recognized that ours will not be a legacy of individual triumph but one of organizational vision founded in Gospel values. Successive presidents must continue to stand not just before you, but with you. There will be a multitude of challenges in the year to come, and it will be my job and the job of your executive to ensure that, through CPCO, each of you has a voice in defining and protecting our future.

What do we do now? Borrowing from the Ontario Catholic School Trustees’ Association bulletin entitled, *Catholic Education: Myths and Realities*, we must primarily continue to speak up for Catholic education!

*Our schools consistently meet or exceed provincial expectations. Our curriculum is purposely designed to produce graduates with good moral character who are responsible citizens, caring family members and collaborative contributors to the common good of Ontario’s society. These are values that we celebrate and share with all Ontarians.*

We must dispel the myths that shroud the future of Catholic education in Ontario and celebrate the fact that we are distinct and proclaim to all that it is, indeed, our faith that is the cornerstone of our continued success. In his president’s report, Don Rait calls for us to continue to work with our partners to build healthy Catholic

communities. To do that, it is incumbent upon us to know our history and share our story. Fr. Mulligan, in his book *Catholic Education: Ensuring a Future*, quotes from a director of education who notes that CPCO has assumed a very important role in the Ontario Catholic education community.

*In Ontario, the principals and vice-principals have developed some great resources on Catholic leadership. The administrative group seems to have found its niche, and it works very well with other Catholic stakeholders. The professional growth shown by CPCO is one positive that has come from Bill 160.*

This sentiment only lends further credence to the ongoing relevance of our charter goals and to the wisdom of those that were responsible for their being so enshrined in our organization. Nevertheless, it is imperative that we never rest on our laurels and that our vision continue to grow. In the months to come, as part of our strategic planning exercise, it will be important to solicit feedback from all of our partners. In this way, CPCO will remain a sought after voice and more importantly, a sought after Catholic voice.

However, let us not be naïve; we cannot have healthy Catholic communities if we do not have healthy Catholic principals and vice-principals. The spectre of a new government, new collective agreements for the many unions within our schools and the myriad of issues facing school leaders from supervision to parental harassment to job security highlight the need for heightened advocacy and member services in the months to come. Mulligan notes:

*Education today has taken on such a mammoth responsibility in attempting to cure all of society’s ills that it is almost incomprehensible that anyone would want to sit in the principal’s chair and be accountable. There is also the rapidity with which education and Catholic education have changed in just the last few years. It is mind-boggling.*

Since 1998, the government of the day has legislated student rights, union rights, parent rights and board rights. While each successive minister of education has decried the importance of principals to this body, none has followed with the legislation so badly needed to provide the job protection required if we are to be truly effective leaders.

An old adage states that in any democratic society or organization, one always gets the government that one deserves. You, the

members of CPCO, deserve an executive that will reach out to government and school boards in an effort to retain the position of every Catholic principal and vice-principal in this province. You deserve an executive that will do what we do best and educate all concerned as to the many inconsistencies between the legislated duties of principals and the negotiated terms and conditions contained in the collective agreements of our unions. You deserve an executive that will work to ensure that performance appraisal for principals and vice-principals is based on professional growth and that those new to administration receive the mentorship needed in what is becoming an increasingly complicated vocation. You deserve an executive that will advocate for adequate funding so that our schools can be organized in such a fashion that every child truly has the opportunity to be successful. You deserve an executive that will bring to light the plight of those whose conditions of employment exist solely as board policy or whose teaching and supervision duties restrict their ability to effectively manage the day-to-day operations of their schools.

CPCO has become a recognized and respected acronym in government circles and beyond and the challenge facing this executive will be to further our scope of influence. We must embrace the challenge of that inevitable question, "What has CPCO done for me?"

To that end, I would like to conclude my remarks by recognizing two long-standing executive members who will not be returning to office next year, Paul Carr and Linda Frost. Paul and Linda have defined servant leadership for many years and their collective wisdom will be impossible to replace. Both Paul and Linda prefaced every remark and opinion with their concern for the children in their care and the faith values to which we ascribe. That is what CPCO is all about. On their behalf, I offer the following quotation from Martha Graham, renowned dancer and choreographer:

*There is a vitality, a life force, an energy, a quickening, that is translated through you into action, and because there is only one of you in all time, this expression is unique. And, if you block it, it will never exist through any other medium and will be lost.*

Paul and Linda, thank you for sharing your energy and your many gifts with us. You will be missed.

Congratulations to the new executive. I look forward to working with them and meeting each of you, the members of CPCO, in the year to come.

## AGM Delegates Elect 2007-08 CPCO Executive Council

This year delegates to the CPCO Annual General Meeting had the opportunity to vote for candidates nominated for five of seven positions on the Executive Council. CPCO would like to thank all members who put forth their names for election.



Back Row L to R: Carole Allen, Treasurer; Lou Rocha, Executive Director; Brian O'Sullivan, Secondary Councillor; Jim Minello, Secondary Councillor; Kevin Malcolm, Elementary Councillor; Joe Czackowski, Elementary Councillor  
Front Row L to R: Joan Duckitt, President-elect; Dan Tighe, President; Don Rait, Past-president; Mary Ellen Agnel, Vice-president