



# Letters from the LCC President

by Shauna Van Praagh

## Letter # 28

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A beautiful combination of bright sunshine and fresh snow offers inspiration for writing this brief mid-January letter. This is a quiet period at the Law Commission. Written texts for our ongoing research projects are slowly but surely moving through a demanding process of drafting and development. The engagement calendar for early 2026 is still under construction so there are not yet any formal activities or travel adventures to report. The calmness of the moment makes it ideal for reflection and resolution.

In looking back to the close of 2025, members of the LCC staff team were invited to share informal experiences or encounters from their time away from the office that prompted them to think of the work of the Law Commission. One described a Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec exhibit on the striking work of Niki de Saint Phalle and the ways in which exploration and discovery

shaped the artist's life and commitment to social justice. Another talked about experiencing law's diversity while driving south through the Appalachians and noting the ways in which regulation of highways signs changed with the crossing of each state border. One repeated his six-year-old's observation after swimming lessons that "there are a lot of rules in the world!" Another made a comparison between revisiting foundational ingredients of law and justice and reaching for old, trusted, and well-worn cookbooks over the holidays.

We listened as one colleague recounted the heavy sense of personal responsibility in volunteering to take on the work of book-keeping and tax return preparation for a small charitable organization. We learned how another colleague drew on a news-related discussion at the office about international law to enrich a conversation with a Venezuelan Canadian she met at



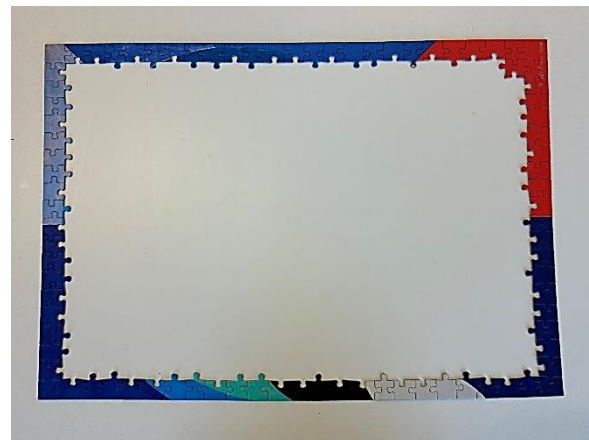
a New Year's celebration. The stories continued around the table, all tied in some way to the storytellers' reflections on the substance and form of the work and commitments of the LCC. Together they illustrated the creative thinking and concrete contributions that nourish the Law Commission even when officially closed for business.



We followed our inventory of "out-of-office" LCC-related moments with a collective sharing of New Year's wishes for the Law Commission. The list was impressive and heartfelt. We heard warm wishes for ongoing discussions and learning, for continued maturing, for enjoyment of close work and big ideas. There was a wish for fun and progress, a wish for collaborative pride, and a wish to take time to notice inspirational moments. We wished for the right mix of sprint and marathon running in the months ahead, successful execution of the LCC's plan to have visited every province and territory by the end of 2026, and a productive mix of support, optimism and hope. Finally, the Commission was wished good adventures guided by our compass with its four points - dream, repair, build, share – that characterize our ever-growing mix of projects and programs.

These are wishes full of hope. They offer light at a moment that does not feel as calm and peaceful as the winter sunshine in Ottawa might suggest. Indeed, the first two weeks of January 2026 have been marked by intense upheaval and uprising in our world; from day to day, it is hard to imagine what tomorrow will bring. It remains worthwhile and important to pause and to share good wishes and positive energy. But for everyone, and in every context, general wishes and resolutions for the new year will need to be accompanied by tangible plans and actions.

At the Law Commission of Canada office, our research director has brought in a puzzle. The pieces have been placed on our lunch table as an explicit invitation into a collective project. No picture has been provided of what the completed product might look like. In the first two weeks, the straight-edged pieces were sorted and the borders finished. The rest is waiting.



Happy New Year!

