



BETWEEN THE LINES

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DATELINE – 1980, THE YEAR OF THE W. I. you heard about if from Area Conventions. You have had several months to think about it. We will be awaiting the setting up of your Branch programs after your Annual Meetings stressing this special year of illumination and celebration. Eighty-three years ago next week, it was one big step for our Co-founders, let us make it a bigger step for 1980.

We all know there are many organizations competing for time and interest of women. In an age when women have more interests and attractions than ever before, more opportunity for putting all their efforts into supplementing the family income, more money for travel, we have our membership keenly interested in W. I. educational programing. Why? Because what other organization has as its objective the study of all areas of living for everyone? One has to establish priorities.

One of our Governor Generals stated that voluntary service is a boon to the individual and a blessing to the community. This year some of you will be asked to assess values of volunteers, suggest direction, and the voluntary contributions necessary, for a society needing workers with unselfish concern and a desire to make the world a better place for all.

Sir William Mulock, at the age of 95, was asked what was the secret of his enjoyment of work. He replied "I am still at work with my hands to the plow and my face to the future. The shadows of evening are lengthening but morning is in my heart." That is the philosophy so needed. Or the late Padre Young, whom W. I. members will remember with affection, often told us "Real happiness lies in the joy of achievement" and his saying "Let's take time to live" inspired W. I. Members to live more creatively.

Some ideas for programing might be copied but you apply them to your community circumstances. But from your anvil of thoughts we hope you have original ideas also. How about introducing these new idea programs to your husbands, by including them in meetings of joint interest? Or after attending an excellent, informative meeting, do you call a member or friend who did not attend and plant a seed of interest by your enthusiastic response?

Margaret Mead said that it is from grandparents that children learn how society keeps going and what keeps it strong and steady for generation after generation. Could you be an adoptive grandparent and thus free a young woman in your community to be a 4-H or Workshop leader? Maybe you know a home in which a handicapped person lives. How wonderful to enrich that life by being the 'someone else' who takes that person to look at nature's beauty or listen and appreciate music with you?

Programs of knowledgeable value and researched information can provide something for members to take home, think about, and interest busy people. The suburbanite population, which has moved to rural Ontario, has never known the same community spirit and must be made to feel a part. Where else is there a group of such community-oriented persons as the Women's Institute who, literally, hold the community together since local schools and churches have gone?

The privilege of choice is one of life's greatest blessings. Each year you can choose to send a delegate to Officers' Conference. There she can gain the 'know-how' to help her in her office, the confidence to tackle problems, and through group participation, return with enthusiastic ideas to surpass previous attempts "For Home and Country."

In 1980, we do not have to go to pasture field in summer, or barn in winter, to harness old Dobbin and drive to W. I. as our ancestors did.

But arriving at W. I. we have an invitation to a contest in which we can match our wits and our knowledge and thus win this contest for a better future for us and coming generations.

As we think of the past three or four decades, we realize they have brought such innovations as astronauts, computer programs, Kentucky-fried chicken, drive-in-banks, studios, Certs, and countless other changes in all phases of life. The W. I. can continue to have a powerful effect as a thinking group, exerting influence for change, a role only possible if programs and resolutions are highly relevant to needs.

An organization and the weather have a lot in common. Both have an element of unpredictability, influence lives, and are characterized by change, but still so different. This winter we have had no problem adjusting to the weather. But in our group relationship of W. I. we do not want to live passively but face up to our purposes, decide what we want to do, allocate responsibility and involve all members.

In May the ACWW Conference will be in West Germany and we should learn about their people, culture, and homeland whether attending or not. Far away pastures may look greener but have we studied the varied cultures of our own country? New horizons will be the keys to unlock more opportunities for self education.

Today we need to take a second and a third look at ourselves, the established W. I. members. We must invite all women of the community to take advantage of our programs and then welcome their ideas, and not just grind out the same old programs in a semi-new dress. Knowledge gained from understanding today's issues can help us become better informed individuals, resolved to walk on our own feet, to work with our own hands, and speak with our own minds.

Florence Diamond