

Between The Lines



*Mrs. Keith Hiepleh
President
Federated
Women's Institutes of
Ontario*

Dear W.I. Members:

The early blooming bulbs in the garden have once again announced that spring is here. It is a joy to breathe the fragrance and behold the sight of these first spring flowers long before the last traces of snow have disappeared. Gradually the lawns will turn green, the trees bring forth leaves and the birds return to build nests and raise their young. Spring is truly the season of hope!

Early in January, on a late spring-like afternoon, at the College of Family and Consumer Studies, University of Guelph, an awards reception was held for the recipients of the 1982 Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario MacDonald Awards.

Students from Ontario admitted to the first semester of the degree program at the college, are eligible to apply for these annual awards. Application forms are available from the assistant registrar, University of Guelph, after the beginning of the semester. The awards are presented after the successful completion of one semester.

Twenty-two recipients from the four provincial Divisions, Eastern, Southern, Western and Northern were selected for the \$200.00 awards. These career-oriented students are most grateful for this award which

helps to purchase text books. A maximum of 25 Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario MacDonald Awards of \$200.00 are available for 1983.

Two weeks later on a cold windy day, I attended a preview of the Rural Seminars for Vital People, at the Skyline Hotel, Toronto. This one day program planned by Rural Organizations and Services, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food, was similar to the workshops held for rural leaders and members of local organizations during the months of February and March.

Approximately 160 leaders attended from the Women's Institutes, Ontario Plowmen's Association, 4-H Clubs, Junior Farmers, Junior Women's Institutes, Agricultural Societies, Horticultural Societies, Ontario Federation of Agriculture and other rural organizations.

This successful seminar concentrated on leadership styles for the 1980s. Workshop topics included, "Aims, Goals and Objectives", "Parliamentary Procedure" and "Effective Leadership and Evaluation". Enthusiastic, capable resource persons kept the workshops running smoothly.

Buzz groups made up of eight to ten persons were set up in each workshop. This method of pooling ideas allowed each person to share his or her own experiences quickly. A spokesperson for each buzz group supplied the findings from that group to the other groups taking part in the session. This method provided an acceptable summary of opinions and suggestions.

The rural leaders were challenged to act as a moving force in their agricultural communities, to set goals to give their organization direction for short, intermediate and long term specific planning; to keep their members fully informed on current issues and to involve the total membership in striving to reach goals. Evaluation of ongoing projects is very necessary on a continuing basis to determine how well the project is doing, what needs to be reconsidered to make the project more satisfactory and workable. At the conclusion of the project a final evaluation by the members and executive is needed to determine the effectiveness of the project and consider whether the goals were reached. Dedicated rural leaders can

strengthen the role of their organization by implementing the valuable suggestions presented at the Rural Seminars for Vital People.

By now, branches throughout the province and all District and Area Conveners, will have received resource sheets produced for Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food. The sheets entitled, "Women — Unlimited Potential" have been prepared with the objective of establishing a common program theme in Ontario. Topics have been suggested for the various convenerships with many program ideas submitted for your consideration. The intent of the sheets is to assist all branch conveners in effective program planning for the coming year. By developing this fascinating and most interesting program theme, "Women — Unlimited Potential" under the suggested topics, branch members are certainly going to gain insight and formulate opinions on current topics.

Prior to producing the information, several meetings and a one day workshop were held to develop ideas for the printed material. At the workshop session, an excellent group of five knowledgeable people provided an input in person or by video-tape for each topic to be discussed. After listening to these five resource people submit up-to-date information, the workshop group was then able to contribute a variety of suitable program suggestions for use at branch meetings.

Over the years many subjects have been covered by our members. However, by concentrating on fewer topics, our organization can become more effective, as our voice is heard speaking out more frequently on fewer issues. Our potential as women is unlimited. Therefore, let us wisely use our ability, positively for the good of people everywhere.

Presenting new topics for consideration at the Branch meetings this coming year, will create an awareness for each of us to improve our knowledge of the issues of the '80s. Careful thought must be given at all times to the upholding of our respected motto, "For Home and Country".

Respectfully submitted,

Janet D Hiepleh

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