

Is time running out?

These suggestions can help you plan a successful program

by Joyce Canning

Last April, when you agreed to take the program for the November meeting, it seemed a long way off, but now November is looming on the horizon and you haven't a thing done! Does this sound like you? then read on.

Let's start with the four P's of program planning:

- 1) Have a **PURPOSE** — is it to inform? to entertain? to promote? to incite?
- 2) Be **PERTINENT** — what is current? what interests your members?
- 3) Have a **PLAN** — know what you want to achieve and how you are going to go about it. **INVOLVE OTHER MEMBERS.**
- 4) Be **PREPARED** — start well in advance of your meeting. Do research, contact speakers, book films or slides, do your homework.

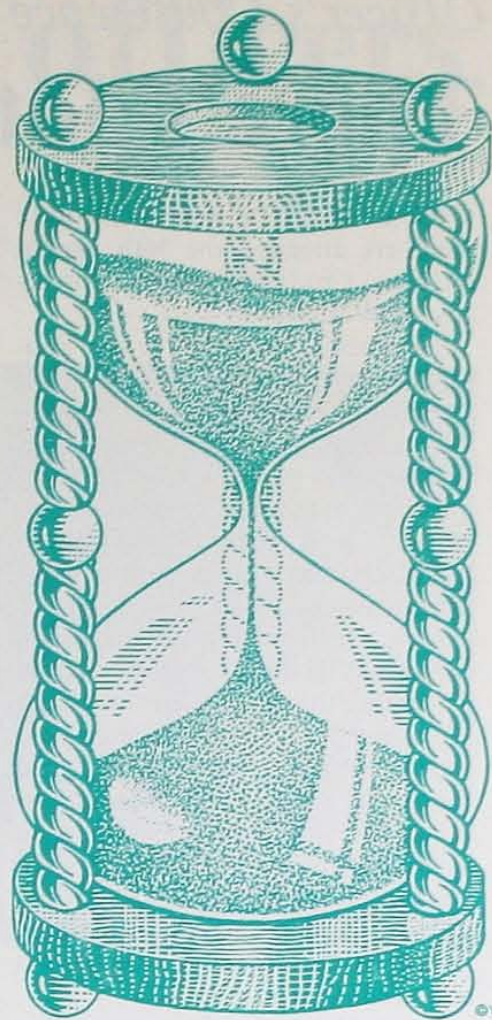
Probably the easiest program for **you** is to invite a guest speaker. Let someone else do the work! Even then, you do have some responsibilities. Be sure the speaker is given adequate direction about the topic to be dealt with; provide background information about the group that would help him or her relate better to the audience; give a definite time frame; check if the speaker will be using any special equipment and that the facilities are adequate. It is always better to confirm all details in writing. There is less chance of misunderstandings happening.

But, maybe you've decided you're quite capable of doing that program yourself — and you are! the first step

is to decide on your topic. For best results, and to make it easier for you, pick something you're really interested in and, preferably, about which you already have some knowledge. This will give you confidence and you will also sound more credible to your audience. Start a file well ahead of time and drop into it anything pertaining to the topic — magazine articles, newspaper clippings, book and film titles, ideas that pop into your mind. Keep everything in one place. A large envelope will do.

If you decide to use a film, video or slides, be sure to book well in advance and be sure you have an opportunity to preview it yourself before the presentation.

How do you make the program interesting? If you are not using any of the above, then do plan to use visuals of some sort and be sure they are large enough for your audience to see. Flipcharts or blackboards are good if they are available. Flash cards can be used for main points you want to stress. Bristol board or backs of old calendars are excellent for this purpose. Short skits or dialogues are a fun way to introduce a topic and get your audience in a receptive frame of mind. Short demonstrations are also effective. Almost any program that **INVOLVES** your audience is going to be a guaranteed success. Include quizzes, discussion groups, question and answer period — whatever suits your purpose best. If you're lucky, most people will retain 25% of what they hear, 75% of what they see, but 90-100% of what they actually do.



Remember, a good program doesn't just happen, it requires careful thought, advanced planning and a good dose of **ENTHUSIASM** contributed by **YOU**.

Here's a program resource

The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food has printed a bicentennial edition of Canada's first cookbook. The *Cook Not Mad Book* is \$4.95 and can be ordered by writing to Communications Branch, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Queen's Park, Legislative Building, Toronto, Ont. M7A 1A5. Make your cheque or money order payable to the Treasurer of Ontario.

For more ideas turn to page 20