

What's the difference be

What are the objectives of your organization?

MARION:

Right at the top of our list is assisting young women with personal growth and developing leadership qualities. A second objective is to promote approved practices in home-making and better understanding of the ideas and standards contributing to a successful home life. A third is to assist and encourage young women to become knowledgeable and responsible citizens.

CHARLOTTE:

I'd say the objectives of FWIO are pretty much the same...in fact, we're in the process of redefining our objectives to give greater priority to developing leadership and more knowledgeable, responsible citizens. There is, of course, also emphasis on promoting and developing good family life skills, and helping to identify and resolve needs in the community.

How do the structures of JWIO and FWIO differ?

MARION:

I think the biggest difference is that we don't have all the committees and reporting that the FWIO has.

CHARLOTTE:

I have to agree that there are some structural differences from the branch level right up to the provincial level. We go from branch to district to areas, which are broken into divisions and sub-divisions, and then provincial. FWIO also has convenorships at all levels, which JWIO does not. Of course, things are changing. Our Constitution Committee will be working in the New Year to eliminate a lot of the reporting.

What are some of the key similarities

MARION:

A lot of our aims and objectives are basically the same. We're both working for the same end results.

CHARLOTTE:

I agree.



Marion Koepke
JWIO President

The old cutoff age for JWIO membership was 35. That restriction was dropped in the early 1980s with the result that there are now JWIO members in their forties. Do you think the cutoff age should be reinstated to ensure a younger membership in JWIO?

MARION:

No, I don't. I think dropping the age restriction was a good move because under the new guidelines anyone who views herself as "a young woman" may join our organization — regardless of her age. I have a 13-year-old son and a 16-year-old son, but I still feel like a young woman. I like the group of women I'm with in JWIO. Their interests are similar to mine and I wouldn't like to have to leave the branch just because I'm over 35.

CHARLOTTE:

Personally, I don't see why JWIO members should feel younger than FWIO members. The original concept of JWI was to provide young girls with an opportunity to develop homemaking skills and to teach them Parliamentary Procedure. I think the original concept of JWI has been taken over by 4-H and Junior Farmers. I really don't see the need for two organizations with aims and objectives that are so related! I think age is irrelevant. We're at the point now where some FWIO members are younger than some JWI members.

There seems to be a lot of differences that exist between Ontario and the Junior Women's Organization.

In an attempt to help Homecoming the two WI organizations, Ac interviewed FWIO president Charlotte Koepke.

Although it was not possible to meet with both women on the same day, both women were asked to share their thoughts on the differences. The only difference was that between Charlotte and Marion. Charlotte also had a chance to share her thoughts. The result was this "dialogue" between the two women.

What, if anything, does a woman gain by leaving JWIO to join FWIO? What, if anything, does she give up?

MARION:

I think a woman might get to meet more women provincially through FWIO, but FWIO does not offer me, as a person, what I need right now. I think a woman risks losing the closeness that comes with belonging to a smaller, less structured organization. I'm not saying she'd lose her JWI friends — but she'd certainly have less time with them.

CHARLOTTE:

I definitely think there's a wider scope when a woman moves from JWI to FWIO. JWI is pretty well confined to Southern Ontario, but an FWIO member can be just as active in Kenora and the extremities of the province as she can be in Southern Ontario. I think a woman also gains a wider sense of commitment to the whole organization. She becomes affiliated with the national body and has input into issues around the world.

Are there some projects in which JWIs and FWIs have worked together in the past, or could work together in the future?