

Magazine becomes networking vehicle

Networking has been the catch word of the 1980's. Like many, at first, I thought this was just a trendy, new word. Now I realize this word has finally identified what many people have been doing all along — talking to one another.

And perhaps to go slightly beyond just talking, networking is talking to one another and making it count. I have observed that evaluation forms from many of our programs are returned with comments like, "The chance to talk to other people like myself about similar concerns was invaluable," or "I didn't realize other people had problems like mine". Networking is valuable because it allows people to share solutions and resources towards the improvement of their lives.

Last fall in Prince Edward Island, farm women from across Canada pointed out the need for a national information network for their group. Prior to that, Ontario rural women also recognized a similar need, as was documented in Molly McGhee's Women in Rural Life study. The question of how to address this need, particularly in Ontario, has been of concern to the Ministry of Agriculture and Food as well as several rural women's organizations.

A publication, available to every rural/farm woman in Ontario would be the logical solution to this network need, however, it occurred to us that such a publication would just be a duplication of **Home & Country** magazine.

At the moment, about 26,000 copies of **Home & Country** are distributed across the province to Women's Institute members and to any other interested person who requests it. The magazine not only provides information about the WI organization, but also resources for program planning, ideas for improving leadership skills, coming events in Ontario, and information on issues such as pornography, child abuse, agriculture, pensions for women etc. In short, there's something of interest to everybody.

At the April meeting of the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario Board, the idea of using **Home & Country** as a provincial networking tool for all rural/farm women was approved. It was pointed out that in

Editorial

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no way would the WI content of the magazine change, it would merely be made available to any group or individual requesting copies. And if a group has a notice of a special event or a program resource, it would be included.

There are quite a few benefits to this idea. First of all, there won't be the extra cost of producing another publication. Wider distribution of **Home & Country** means information about WI activities and programs will be made known to more people. This will not only improve the image of WI, but may also encourage new members. And, WI members will have the opportunity of being in touch with people with similar concerns, but possibly new solutions and resources.

So far, several groups in Ontario have requested copies of **Home & Country**. I expect as word gets out about this opportunity, more will want to be added to the mailing list.

I look forward to hearing from them.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome two new members to the **Home & Country** Editorial Committee. They are Betty Ann Mollard of Parkhill and Shirley Loy of Powassan. The editorial committee provides me with constructive criticism and helps to plan upcoming issues of the magazine. If you have any ideas, please pass them along to a committee member. Also, thanks to Margaret Leuty and Shirley Bird for serving so capably on the committee over the last year.

I would like to offer a couple of small reminders. The first one is if you are requesting something, whether it be supplies, **Home & Country** or other information from the office here in Guelph, please include your postal code on your return address. We consider an address incomplete if the code is missing — and so does the post office!

If you are sending photographs to **Home & Country**, please do not submit colour photos which are either blurry, very dark or very light. Do not send polaroid photos, they will not reproduce well at all.

In your next

HOME & Country

WOMEN IN POLITICS

Home & Country talks to Women's Institute members who have been or are involved in politics. How do you become elected? What kind of responsibilities do local, provincial, federal politicians have? Why is politics still a male domain?

GUEST EDITORIAL

Rose Triska, a member of Troy WI, will be writing the guest editorial. Her topic will be To Join or Not to Join ... the Women's Institute.

ACWW IN IRELAND

Reports from Ontario delegates to the ACWW conference will be featured in the October, November, December issue.

PR POINTERS

District Public Relations Officer Elma Sutherland, Carleton East, will be offering some public relations tips for all WI members.