

What is ACWW?

To Women's Institute members, the acronym ACWW is a familiar one. For the benefit of our new readers, it translates to **Associated Country Women of the World**. This world wide organization had its beginnings in the late 1920's as an outgrowth of the International Council of Women and finally developed its own constitution in 1933. The woman usually credited with the idea of forming an international organization specifically for rural women was a Canadian, Mrs. Alfred Watt, and she also became the first president.

What does ACWW do?

It **WORKS** for improved rural conditions and better homes.

It **LINKS** country women and homemakers all over the world.

Currently there are 141 member societies from 30 countries (9 million members).

It **HOLDS** a conference every three years where every society may be represented and individual members may attend. The next one is in Kansas, Missouri, from Sept. 21 to Oct. 1, 1989.

It **INFORMS** through its quarterly newsletter, the *Country Woman*.

It **ARRANGES** regional conferences through its area presidents. The area president for Canada is Yolande Calve, a member of *Circles des Fermieres du Quebec*.

It **PROMOTES** leadership training courses, seminars and individual scholarships through both its Lady Aberdeen and the Elsie Zimmern Scholarships.

It **ASSISTS** member societies and individuals through its projects committee, initiating projects through central office and member societies.

It **GIVES** first hand information about the United Nations organization.

It **KEEPS** the members' points of view before the UN on such matters as food, nutrition, education and culture, child care, economic and social problems. As a women's international non-governmental organization, ACWW has consultative status with

Reflections from ROS Joyce Canning



the UN's Economic and Social Council and a number of other UN bodies.

It **SPONSORS** nutrition education projects in developing countries to prevent diseases caused by nutritional deficiencies.

ACWW does not dictate any policies or program. Each member society is

totally autonomous. Memberships fall into four categories:

A **Constituent Society** is an organized body of country women who elect their own officers and whose aims are in harmony with ACWW. It may appoint voting delegates to council and to the triennial conference. Fee is 30 pounds sterling.

An **Associate Society** may become a Constituent Society after 18 months. It may send one voting delegate to the triennial conference. Fee is 20 pounds sterling.

continued on page 19

Communications break down

Between the Lines

Margaret Munro



Having a large membership and covering a large geographic area has its advantages and disadvantages. One of the problems we share with other WI's in other provinces and also with other organizations, is communications.

The dictionary defines the word communicate "to exchange ideas through speech, writing, telephone; communications can be notices, reports, bulletins, directives, information, statements and liaison etc." Communication, how often we hear and use the word, but more important, how many times we carry out its meaning. An old dictionary states "a military system of maintaining contacts, as by messenger, telephone, telegraph or wireless and for keeping troops and supplies **going forward**."

We have a marvellous system in place which is used as a communication tool. However, it functions as a chain which is only as strong as its weakest link. When a link is broken so communications break down. The higher up the chain the link breaks, the less effective it becomes. There are many reasons for the break — procrastination, apathy or just plain forgetting, to name a few. Whatever

the cause, the effect is the same. We are all guilty of being the weak link at sometime in some aspect of our lives, but when it effects an organization, it creates problems for others.

I recently received a letter from members who were confused about what the two cents for Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW) was actually used for. We have been told this many times. Maybe because most of us know, we forget others may not. We do not pass the information on, especially to new members. Those members settled the question by asking — communications is a two-way street. Your liaison between the FWIO Board is your board director. Make sure you know who she is, and listen to her information.

Last February a bulletin was sent to every branch with pertinent information which we wanted to reach the grassroots immediately. It actually cost over \$400 for this mailing, but because of the time frame, and to clarify parts of the new constitution, it was considered important and urgent information. However, a number of branches never heard of it. I am sure some can be blamed on the post, but not all. Could it be the weak link? The word bulletin appeared in very large print at the top of the form and its content was short and direct. To be 100 per cent effective any message must reach all members. This

continued on page 19