

Anna Jackson

By Carol Stewart-Kirkby

Anna Jackson, the new Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario (FWIO) secretary-treasurer, says her involvement in founding the Manitoba Alzheimer's Society gave her lots of experience with a volunteer organization. And it's that experience she is tapping for her new job with FWIO.

Working from the FWIO office at the Guelph Agriculture Centre, Anna is learning more and more about Women's Institutes as each day passes. "I have never been a member of WI, but I have always been aware of the organization. For instance members of the Alzheimer's society were WI members, and often they would contact our resource centre for speakers," Anna explained. She very much enjoys the accounting portion of her new job and is interested in making the office as efficient as possible.

Anna and her husband, a pulp and paper engineer, live on her family's fifth generation farm in Puslinch. It's the farm where Anna grew up. After high school, Anna left home and attended the University of Toronto where she studied history and then went on to teachers' college. She taught for five years in Toronto, London and Cornwall and then married and moved to Montreal with her husband and raised a son and a daughter.

In 1973, the family moved to Winnipeg and it was there that Anna became interested in Alzheimer's, a disease which afflicted both her parents-in-law. Anna began the society or organization from her home on a volunteer basis. Five hundred people came to the first meeting in June 1982. "That first year we organized marathon bridge games to try to raise some money. We had an answering service only, not an office in the beginning. In 1984, we received



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funding from Health and Welfare Canada for three years as a pilot project to set up a resource centre and office," Anna said. With the establishment of the office, Anna became a paid employee of the Manitoba Alzheimer's Society and was also chairman of membership. "We discovered about 15,000 people in Manitoba have some sort of Alzheimer's," Anna added.

Although the Alzheimer's society took a lot of Anna's time, she did get involved in some other activities. The music teacher at her daughter's school asked for parents, with or without music background, to form a band. "I already had Grade 10 piano, but it was really fun with people with such a wide variety of music experience," Anna said. Also, Anna went back to high school to pick up some business courses.

About a year ago, Anna returned to Ontario. As well as working for

FWIO, she is busy working on a local history and has been writing a column for the local newspaper, the Puslinch Pioneer. And, her music talents are being put to good use as supply organist to a nearby church.

Anna says the old farm home requires quite a lot of work. During the summer, she was moving perennial beds and she and her husband were renovating and re-organizing parts of the house.

In the FWIO office, Anna hopes to learn the answers to all WI members' questions, when they call, write or visit. If you do decide to drop in, Anna suggests you go to reception, ask for her, and she will meet you half way! Anna's office hours are 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday to Thursday, and if you happen to call and get an answering machine, remember Anna has to go to the bank and do other chores which take her out of the office.