



Our first AGM in November is now behind us and a New Year is dawning! It was a challenge, but one that was met head on by our capable Provincial Office Staff. Thanks to Kim Sauder, Andrea Morrison, Lynn Zizzo and Leah Nicholls for getting us through the year end, Annual General Meeting and on to the next challenge – preparations for the January Board Meeting (all in a very short time). Well done ladies!

I am looking forward to working with our new Provincial Board, Officers and Coordinators and would like to thank them all for volunteering to be part of the WI team. Unfortunately, Ellen Martin is unable to fulfill her term as Membership Coordinator and has tendered her resignation. The Board would like to thank Ellen and wish her good luck for the future. Please welcome Debbie Bauer as Membership Coordinator, by appointment, for a one year term. Membership is a crucial component of FWIO. It is time for us to help ourselves by inviting our family, friends and community to join us. Recently, I asked someone why they had not attended a WI meeting. Her response was, “I was never asked”. It is as simple as asking someone to attend a meeting. What do you have to lose? You might be surprised by the response.

Don't forget our Back 2 Basics theme and check out the ROSE Program Calendar that Andrea has put online for your use. There are some great ideas for ROSE Programs that are sure to get your community members interested in finding out more.

It is time to remind ourselves of where we came from and to celebrate our accomplishments. As Women's Institute Members, we can take pride in the knowledge that we have affected so many lives through advocating for change in our communities, province, country and world-wide through our participation in the ACWW and the United Nations. Together, our Members form a strong voice but also a warm and compassionate hand in times of need. The formation of a new Provincial Disaster Relief

Fund will help to support our communities in times of misfortune. This designated fund was formed as a result of the dissolution of the Community Crisis Quilts Project that began in 2011 when Goderich was devastated by a tornado. The committee members felt that since donations were received from all over the province, that the communities throughout the province should be recipients in times of disaster. The remaining quilts and cash were donated to FWIO for a new designated fund and a committee, chaired by Debbie Bauer, was formed to set criteria and to oversee the distribution of funds when necessary. Over \$1,200 has been raised from the sale of the quilts since the AGM in November! Donations to this fund are welcome.

At the January Board Meeting, the Officers and Coordinators were asked to join us for a one-day, Round Table Discussion. Watch your Board Highlights for the innovative ideas that resulted from the discussions.

2014 was a year of change and challenges. The office move was a success and the Erland Lee (Museum) Home has benefitted from the wonderful donations and by the loving care of the Erland Lee Community Committee and volunteers. The Museum will feature displays in 2015 celebrating the 100th anniversaries of 4-H and the Junior Women's Institutes. I am looking forward to an exciting and prosperous new year with hopes that WI becomes a household name once again!

Yours for Home and Country,

Margaret Byl

*Mark your
calendars!*

