

From Rainbow Country



By Elsie Stephenson

Good day from Rainbow Country! This winter's weather ranged from bitter cold in January to a thaw in February. Spring heralds the greening of lawns and trees.

At the January Provincial Board Meeting, it was decided that if Branches, Districts, Areas and individuals would like to offer help to people in countries hit by the Tsunami, they could send cheques to the Provincial Office made payable to the Red Cross with a notation on the memo line "Tsunami." The office will collect and forward the cheques.

The FWIO Provincial Conference 2006 competitions were accepted (see page 11). Past FWIO Presidents will be recognized Friday evening at the Provincial Conference being held August 11-13, 2006, at Fanshawe College in London. Plan to attend and take in the workshops being offered.

The provincial theme for 2006 will be "Keep Our FWIO ROSE Blooming." An Area in the province will be highlighted in "The Connecting Link" beginning after the April Board Meeting. Areas were selected at random with Grey-Bruce being the first.

A positive mood prevailed at the FWIO Annual Meeting. The reports and workshops were informative and enjoyable. Members were pleased with the new election procedures, venue and warm and relaxed atmosphere. Next year the Annual Meeting will have a new format, with two 30-minute workshops.

At the April Provincial Board meeting, the Strategic Implementation Plan was reviewed. The strategies under each Strategic Objective were discussed in order to start the Business Plan.

The proposal to send craft supplies to countries in the Caribbean, Central and

South America was approved. Mary Janes, International Officer, will be supplying more information on the project. The Associated Country Women of the World Projects Committee has announced the triennium project for Canada. Read more about this on page 6.

Carolyn Pletsch from the University of Guelph presented a positive ROSE Program Evaluation. She had conducted personal interviews and used the survey questionnaires from the ROSE Sessions. She felt the results illustrated the kind of programming that would provide for membership growth in the future. Carolyn stated that by working together, community representatives, ROSE partner organizations and ROSE Program staff would make the program even more valuable.

Recruitment of new members is exceeding expectations. Washago WI in Simcoe East District had the most new members with eight; second place went to Oxdrift WI in Kenora District with 5. Five Branches tied for third place with four new members. Twelve Branches achieved three new members and they will receive honourable mentions. Branches have done a fantastic job at recruiting new members! Our next goal is to start new Branches.

The revised *Handbook* inserts were sent to the Districts, one copy to be distributed to each Branch at the District Annuals. Some Board Directors will be selling inserts, as well as Quilt Show tickets.

The money raised by "Focus High For WI" for the Erland Lee (Museum) Home is being used for repairs at the Lee. Interior wood and electrical work have been completed. Work will begin on the East porch in May. Thank you to all the members for their generous donations. See page 16 of the Winter 2005 *Home &*

Country for upcoming events at the Lee. The Federated Women's Institutes of Canada Board Meeting will be held July 8-11 in St. John's, Newfoundland. FWIC has launched a national project "FWIC-Into the North." Read more about this project on page 7. Also look for a flyer coming to your Branch. The FWIC Convention will be held in Red Deer, Alberta, from June 14-17, 2006.

Have you bought the FWIO book *Fighting for Home & Country*? This book tells the stories of brave and patriotic young girls and women during World War II. See the front cover of the Winter 2005 edition of the *Home & Country* for details on how to obtain this wonderful book.

Thank you to Branches and Districts for inviting me to their 100th anniversaries. Congratulations on attaining this special milestone! Keep up the task of educating women and advocating their concerns.

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A Great Idea!

Renfrew South District Women's Institutes have been on a campaign to recycle old cell phones. Working under the guidance of Pitch-In Canada, 75 phones and lots of accessories were collected in 2004 and shipped to their offices this past January. The response was so great the District is doing it again this year. What an easy way to clean up the environment, reduce toxins in landfills and earn some money for the District.

Submitted by Jo-Anne Camelon, PRO,
Renfrew South, Eastern Area.