

# Public Relations Report

By Rose Marie Smith

Spring is in the air! Spring signifies new beginnings and a fresh look on life. So, let us look to the Women's Institute with new ideas to promote a positive image, to promote a progressive image and to promote an organization for women, their families and their communities.

## An Impressive Idea!

The idea was simple – the Codrington WI advertised in the local newspapers or in community newsletters. They paid close attention to the wording: spelling and accuracy were of prime concern, as was grammar. Their well thought out and designed advertisement presented a professional image and was key to their effective use of this media. The visually appealing ad presented WI facts in a positive way and was geared to generating new members by encouraging women to inquire for more information by telephoning a specific number. Why not modify this to suit your Branch needs?

## Blue Hats

Vittoria WI members wore their Blue Hats to lunch at a local restaurant on February 19 as they celebrated the anniversary of the inception date of the Women's Institute. The Blue Hats, of course, are a curiosity allowing curious people the opportunity to question. In turn, members are able to relay facts and information about the WI in a nice quiet way. Word gets around that the Women's Institute is still active in the community. What a great idea to meet occasionally for lunch, while donning your Blue Hats!

## Hats off to Thunder Bay District

As outlined on page 9 of the Winter 2005 issue of the *Home & Country* newsletter, the Thunder Bay District Women's Institute published their first newsletter last September. District Public Relations Coordinator Jeanne Davies collates the information submitted from the Branches onto to a legal-sized sheet of paper, which is then folded in half, becoming a four-page newsletter packed with news.

The more I thought about and read these newsletters, the more sure I became that this was a great idea for each District and Area in the province. It is a great way to keep the Districts involved and, most

importantly, the newsletter provides a communication link between the Branches and between each Branch and the District. Sharing generates new ideas for fundraising, meetings and programs and builds a strong WI focus in an area.

## WI Week

How did your Branch celebrate the Women's Institute anniversary? Perhaps each Branch or District would like to establish an annual celebration ritual for the Women's Institute anniversary date in February. For example, the ritual could be that each member string white lights or blue and gold lights on a tree or shrub and light them on February 19 each year. This could be a newsworthy event for the local newspaper informing the public of this special day and keeping the focus on local Branches of the Women's Institute.

Why not share your promotional ideas with everyone? Drop me a line and let me know. I will compile a list for distribution.

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## Nelson WI – The “Blue Bonnet Belles”



The Nelson Women's Institute was formed 79 years ago and was named after the village of Nelson, located at the corner of the Guelph Line and the Dundas highway. Nelson WI is the southern most Branch in the Wellington Halton District. Members come from Milton, Oakville, Mississauga and Burlington and surrounding areas. The group of 28 members has a lot of fun and laughter at their meetings, in addition to guest speakers and informative programs. They officially presented themselves last December with the new identifying mark of the Blue Hats. They are now dubbed the Nelson WI “Blue Bonnet Belles.”

Submitted by Maisie MacKay, PRO, Nelson WI, Wellington Halton, Guelph Area.