

Advocacy Coordinator's Report

By Ruth Kennedy

These last several months have been a steep learning curve for me, but I am enjoying the challenge. Thanks to everyone for their encouragement, understanding and assistance.

My first major task was writing to the appropriate government officials in support of the resolutions passed at the FWIO Annual Meeting. These resolutions covered a wide range of topics (refer to page 8 of the Spring 2003 newsletter), including funding and awareness of AIDS, pension rights for home caregivers, research on mosquito-borne diseases and mandatory home economics and/or life skills courses in high schools. Even though the original resolutions were passed by ACWW, they apply to us here in Ontario as well as around the world.

The government of Ontario has just announced a comprehensive strategy for combating the West Nile virus, providing funding for the education of the public, laboratory research and mosquito control programs. Was it spurred by our resolution?

At the Annual Meeting, an emergency resolution was passed urging the government to allow smaller charitable organizations to fall under different guide-

lines than larger lotteries when applying for licences. A reply from the Ministry of the Attorney General informed us that licencing of lotteries for charitable purposes now falls under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Consumer and Business Services, whose current Minister is Tim Hudak. Letters to Mr. Hudak supporting the WI's need to receive licences to carry on their charitable work can only benefit the cause.

In January a brief was presented to the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Stage 2 Draft Nutrient Management Regulations. With help from the Kars Branch where the resolution originated, we urged the government to have province-wide regulations in effect before allowing the spreading of biosolids on agricultural land.

Please be sure your resolutions are properly signed and dated with the names of the Branch President and Secretary, the name, place and date of the District meeting, and the signatures of the District President and Secretary. As well, be sure to include a return address. Remember, resolutions for local causes do not have to go to FWIO, but can be sent directly to the local municipal authority.

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Profile

Meet Ruth Kennedy, Your New Advocacy Coordinator



Ruth Kennedy grew up on a dairy farm in North Gower, Ontario. Ruth has been married for 45 years to her husband George, a farmer who switched to the construction business. They have three married daughters and 10 grandchildren. Ruth's goal is to make a quilt for each grandchild; she has six more to go. Her hobbies include quilting, gardening, tennis, bridge and traveling.

Ruth is a retired High School Teacher/Librarian. Currently, she is a Sunday School Teacher at the Dunrobin United Church, a volunteer at the Community Resource Centre and a canvasser for the Cancer Society. A priority in Ruth's life is visiting her mother at the nursing home.

Ruth is a 43-year member of the Dunrobin Women's Institute and follows in the footsteps of her mother, grandmother and mother-in-law, all long-time members. She has held all offices at the Branch level and is a Life Member. At the District level, Ruth has been Secretary-Treasurer and taken on the numerous convenorships. When applying for the position of Provincial Lobbying Coordinator, Ruth stated: "The WI can have a positive influence at all levels of government to better society as a whole, and women in particular."



Jelly Belly Bears & Stuff

Roebuck Women's Institute members were privileged to create a Teddy Bear from scratch during the height of the winter doldrums. Debbie Findlay introduced the idea and arranged to have Millie McLaughline, owner and instructor of Jelly Belly Bears & Stuff, assist members in making their very own unique Teddy Bear. Millie gave generously of her time and talent, aptly assisted by Colleen Hart, as members cut out bear patterns with special scissors. After pinning the pieces together, members were shown how to stitch them together. Next they learned how to insert the bear's eyes, stuff the nose with sawdust waste and place the ears. Millie's husband John showed us how to join the bear's body parts with cotter pins, so our bear would have moveable parts. After stuffing with polyester fiberfill, stitching the openings together and combing the fur, the bears were complete! What a great way to provide education, a social outlet and personal growth for members!

Submitted by Jenny Van Ryswyk, Roebuck WI, Grenville, Eastern Area.