

Annual Meeting Report

January 14, 2003

FWIO President's Message

Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario (FWIO) President Dianne Orr began her message by applauding the work of the Women's Institute. She commented that while the organization has been around long enough to experience incredible changes, the original vision of the WI to improve the standard of living for all mankind still exists. Orr also gave a great deal of credit to the Board Directors as they dealt with the business of the organization, and to the Provincial Advisory Councillors and Coordinators as they worked to communicate information to the Branches. Orr proudly presented the details of what she has called The President's Penmanship Challenge (refer to page 2).

Education Coordinator's Report

Although unable to attend the Annual Meeting, Education Coordinator Joan King's written report noted that the words Rural Ontario Sharing Education are truly what the Women's Institute is all about. The District Education Reports certainly testified to the fact that members took these words to heart. Branches across the province were busy educating their members and their local communities about many topics. Have a look at the District Education Reports that came in your Branch mailing.

High on the list this past year were the topics of Food Safety and Nutrition and the ROSE Health Program. Other Branches reported on the topic of personal safety with respect to traveling alone, home invasion and telephone fraud and the PHONEBUSTERS program. Agriculture was watched closely again by the Education Committee this past year. The Ontario Federation of Agriculture's (OFA) wireless network is closer to becoming a reality. Bill 81, Ontario's Nutrient Management Act, has been passed and farmers are waiting for the development of appropriate regulations to make it workable on Ontario farms. FWIO made a submission to the Prime Minister's Task Force on Future Opportunities in Farming and some of that content was included in the final report.

In conclusion to her last three years as Provincial Education Coordinator, King said she looked



The members of the FWIO Provincial Board (seated, left to right) are Past President Christine Reaburn, President Dianne Orr and President-Elect Elsie Stephenson. Standing, left to right, are Board Directors Gloria Pakkala, June Feaver, Cecilia Maines, Carol Force, Glenna Ladell, Joy Trimble, Norine Empey and Joan Folkard.



Shown from left to right are Christine Reaburn – International Convenor, Cindy Lockhart – Membership Coordinator, Peggy McLeod – Tweedsmuir Coordinator, Ruth Kennedy – Lobbying Coordinator and Arthena Hecker – FWIO Executive Officer to FWIC. Absent – Gillian Catto – ROSE Coordinator.

forward to visiting with the many new and continuing friends she had made during her term.

Interim Lobbying Coordinator's Report

Interim Lobbying Coordinator Anne Dyas reported that three responses to resolutions had been received since her update in the Winter 2002-2003 *Home & Country*.

Response re: Banning the Use of Bio Solids

Carleton District resolved that since bio solids come from many different sources that the use of them for any purpose be banned until standards were in place. The Honourable Helen Johns, Minister of Agriculture, replied: "Under the Nutrient Management Act, new standards will be developed for all land applied materials containing nutrients including bio solids and septage." The standards are to be addressed in Stage 2 of the consultations on the Nutrient Management Act. For each Stage, draft regulations will be posted at www.gov.on/OMAFRA/english/agops/index.html, or you may contact the Agricultural Information Contact Centre toll free at 1-877-424-1300.

Response re: Genetic Screening and Privacy of Gene Information

Perth South District requested genetic screening at a reasonable cost and Lincoln District requested privacy of gene information. The Hon. Anne McLennan, Minister of Health, apologizes for the delay in the response and said that the Genetic Privacy and Information Working Group, struck towards the end of 2001, "is particularly sensitive to the issues of privacy as it relates to the collection, use, storage, disclosure and management of personal genetic information." The report is expected later this year.

"The Expert Working Group on Genetic Testing for Late Onset Diseases is entering the last stages of its examination of the benefits and risks of genetic testing. The overall goal is to identify and examine the issues that relate to legislation, research, ethical and social aspects, economics and clinical practice within the Canadian context."

"In accordance with the provisions of *The Canadian Health Act* genetic screening or testing is considered to be an insured health service when it is medically necessary and provided in a hospital or diagnostic clinic providing hospital care."

The Ontario Minister of Health, Tony Clement, has announced that Ontario will continue to provide a test for genetic screening of breast cancer.

Response re: Raising the Age of Consent to Sexual Activity

Niagara District resolved to raise the age of consent to sexual activity to 16 years. The Honourable Martin Cauchon, Minister of Justice and Attorney General, writes: "Children are a priority for the Government of Canada, which is committed to taking the necessary measures to safeguard our children against sexual exploitation. This is an issue that requires continuous monitoring and review. The document *Child Victims and the Criminal Justice System (concluded in 2001)* may be accessed at www.canada.justice.gc.ca

A few resolutions were found to have received no response at year's end. Letters were written to Prime Minister Chretien with regard to a medical examination for immigrants, bulk water