

# Board Briefings

January 13, 2003

The Board of the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario (FWIO) met at the Kempenfeldt Conference Centre in Barrie for their January meeting. The FWIO Open Annual Meeting followed on January 14. The FWIO Provincial Board, Coordinators, Provincial Advisory Councillors and Committees of the Board participated in a series of workshops and discussions on the third day.

The following are items covered at the FWIO Board Meeting:

## Review of FWIO Finances

The FWIO Board reviewed the organization's finances and highlighted areas that warrant further discussion in efforts to cover the shortfall being incurred each year. The Board had a brainstorming session with respect to the finances and restructuring the levels of the organization. To generate additional operating revenue, the Board also felt that several ideas warranted future discussions, including a special fundraising event, increasing membership and an increase in the membership fee.

## FWIO Strategic Plan

The FWIO Board reviewed the organization's Strategic Plan making minor revisions to who was responsible for sections of the Implementation Plan that previously fell under the duties of the Marketing & Resource Development Director.

## Lobbying Coordinator's Report

### Fair Trade Coffee

Outgoing Interim Lobbying Coordinator Anne Dyas presented the following information and proposal to the Board about Fair Trade Coffee.

Dyas explained that coffee is big business! Next to oil, coffee is the second most heavily traded commodity in the world. But for the majority of small coffee farmers who live in rural communities in some of the poorest countries in the world, the benefits are small. The chain of events that leads from the farm to your cup is long and expensive. Processors, creditors, exporters, brokers and a cast of middlemen, known to Latin American farmers as "coyotes," all come between you and the farmers before you get to sip your morning brew. Since the deregulation of coffee prices in 1985, world coffee prices are constantly changing, "coyotes" pay the lowest price possible and coffee farmers never know how much they'll get for their crops. The producers of a rich crop struggle to make a simple living and are often trapped in poverty.

But there is an alternative! Worker owned cooperatives offer consumers fairly traded coffee and tea direct from the small-scale farmer cooperatives in Latin America, Africa and Asia. These worker-owned cooperatives seek to balance the inequities found in the conventional coffee trade by adopting the internationally recognized European fair trade standards, which include:

- always paying a fair price to the farmer, including a guaranteed minimum when market prices are low and above market premiums for quality and certified organic coffee
- working directly with democratically run farming cooperatives – businesses that are owned and governed by and for the farmers – so that the benefits of trade actually reach the farmers and their communities
- providing vital advance credit to farmers; which is normally unavailable or offered at prohibitive rates.

For more information about Fair Trade Coffee check out [www.equalexchange.com](http://www.equalexchange.com)

### Proposal to the FWIO Board re: Fair Trade Coffee

Dyas proposed:

- that individuals and Women's Institute groups and members purchase Fair Trade coffees and teas for their own personal use and for use at WI functions;
- that individuals and Women's Institute groups and members promote the sale and use of Fair Trade coffees and teas in their communities by asking their grocery stores, health food stores, cooperatives, cafes and restaurants, offices and places of worship to offer Fair Trade coffees as an alternative to the well-known brands; and,
- that by promoting the use of Fair Trade coffee and tea and using it ourselves would help fulfill the mandate of WI in that members would be supporting members of several ACWW countries.

Look for the Fair Trade Certified Logo on the coffee containers. To find a retail outlet of Fair Trade Coffee near you, or for a list of companies licensed by Transfair Canada go to [www.transfair.ca](http://www.transfair.ca) or call 1-888-663-FAIR.

It was the consensus of the FWIO Board that the information that the Lobbying Coordinator had collected on Fair Trade coffee be distributed to members in the Annual Branch Mailing. Organize a Branch program around this issue.

## Other Items Covered

Ask your Provincial Advisory Councillor or Board Director for more information on these other items covered at Board:

- Restore the Roof Update
- International Convenor's Report
- Request for Host Families for MAFCE Visitors
- ACWW Conference 2004 Update
- Erland Lee (Museum) Home National Historic Site Designation
- 4<sup>th</sup> Line Theatre Remount For Home and Country
- Motions

## Minden WI Donates to Health Services

Within one year Minden Women's Institute raised \$2,000 of a \$2,500 pledge to the Haliburton Highlands Health Services Foundation. The group presented Foundation representatives Dale Walker and Jack Woodcroft with a cheque, while they served tea to the residents of Hyland Crest. Pictured are Mary Cox, Jean Cox, Bette Herlihey, Nancy Gayton, Elva Deacon, Mable Deacon, Rita Baird, Beaulah Hewitt, Irma Walker, Dolores Cartmill, Pam Rolfe and Mary Wilson.

Submitted by Dolores Cartmill, Minden WI, Victoria East.

