

This is the last in the series about the nine geographic Areas into which the Associated Country Women of the World has divided the continents for representation and administrative purposes. The first part focuses on the 21 countries in the Europe and Mediterranean Area; the second part on the Caribbean, Central and South America Area.

### Europe and Mediterranean Area

Twenty-one countries officially form the Europe and Mediterranean Area. Current President Everdine Sanders-Vonk of the Netherlands reports in an email that she has 182 societies in these countries whose members speak 19 different languages!

- The current ACWW President Hilda Stewart has been a Women's Institute member in Northern Ireland since 1970. She served as European Area President during the re-establishment of ACWW links with Eastern European women's groups in the 1990s. This exciting development of bringing Eastern Europe back into ACWW culminated in 1999 when the Czech Republic hosted the Area Conference.
- The ACWW 5-year Eastern European Program objective is to achieve compliance with international standards of children's and women's rights and to continue to focus on youth, utilizing resources in their own communities.
- Three strong women are credited with the formation of ACWW. Madge Watt, the Canadian who moved to England and became the first President of ACWW, had a vision that she alone could not achieve. The two European women who worked with her are Lady Aberdeen and Elsie Zimmern. Lady Aberdeen, a hard worker whose roots were in rural Britain was the wife of the Viceroy of Ireland and the Governor General of Canada. She used her influence as International Council of Women (ICW) President to bring to the forefront both the needs of countrywomen and the challenges of rural living. The calm, serene Elsie Zimmern, who had a unique talent to advise without dictating, provided strong leadership in her role as General Secretary of the ICW and later in her work with ACWW.

Lady Aberdeen, Elsie Zimmern and Madge Watt tackled many obstacles from 1927 to 1933, when the ACWW was officially named, and they continued to iron out insurmountable problems during the fledgling years of the organization.

### Caribbean, Central and South America Area

- Formed in 1986, the Area is made up of societies in Colombia, Guyana, Grenada, Jamaica, St. Vincent & Grenadines and Trinidad & Tobago.
- Area President Carmen Romero of Colombia reports that her biggest challenge is communications in this diverse Area.
- In St. Vincent & Grenadines the Lauders Women in Agriculture have carried out a combined agricultural production and nutritional education project.
- In El Lago, Colombia, the Colombian Association of Country Women (AMAR) recently undertook to restock a lake with freshwater fish to improve the diet and health of the local community of 650 families. As stocks of fish increase, people will pay to fish in the lake, which is currently being redesigned to maximize the benefits of the scheme. A caretaker's hut is also being built to prevent fish being stolen.
- In Colombia, as well as parts of Asia, Africa and the South Pacific, a very successful 5-year Norwegian Global Development Program was undertaken in 1991 to improve the quality of life through leadership training in empowerment, personal and community development.
- In Peru, "Water for Kids" was undertaken as a village communal kitchen project to feed almost 1,000 people daily.
- Members of the Grenada Homemakers' Association have started knitting classes for their members. Thirty women in two groups are starting 8-week courses, which will help them set up their own income-generating business.



- Day visitors are welcome! Day visitors do not have to have individual membership in ACWW. Day visitors will be limited to two events as outlined below, not including Ontario Day. Registration forms have been made available to all Branches; ask your Branch Secretary. Return registration forms and fees for Day Visitors to FWIO at 7382 Wellington Road 30, RR 5, Guelph ON N1H 6J2. The Registration deadline for Day Visitors is April 27, 2001.

The costs for Day Visitors are as follows:

- June 12 – evening; Opening Ceremonies - \$35
- June 13 – all day; Keynote Speaker Norman Rebin, Interfaith Service, ACWW President's Address, plenary session - \$70
- June 14 – evening; A Canadian Mosaic - \$35
- June 15 – all day; four theme speakers and discussion groups - \$70
- June 16 – Ontario Day at The Farm Museum, Milton: barbecue and entertainment - \$35
- June 17 – late afternoon and evening; Canada Area Meeting; Farewell Gala Banquet and speaker - \$70
- Companion Tours for partners and visitors are scheduled from June 11 to 17, during the Triennial Conference. They include bus tours of industries, agricultural endeavours and scenic, cultural and historic sites in Hamilton, St. George, Stoney Creek, the Niagara Peninsula, Toronto and the surrounding counties.
- Home Hospitality lists are available from FWIO for those delegates wishing to see Ontario through the eyes of Women's Institute families across the province. What an opportunity to get off the beaten tourist paths to see the real Ontar-i-ar-io!
- Photographs will be available for sale, as well as audiotapes. Videotapes are not being offered for sale by the Triennial Conference Committee. The Sales & Display Area will have many unique souvenir and commemorative items of interest to participants.

Make every effort possible to participate in the 23<sup>rd</sup> Triennial Conference to meet, greet and get acquainted with people from around the world, right here at your doorstep!

*Mary Janes is the Public Relations Director for the Ontario Coordinating Committee planning the ACWW 2001 Conference.*