

Board Briefings

FWIO Annual Meeting Report

Nov. 29 - 30, 1999

Teamwork and improved communications was the message relayed by outgoing FWIO President Arthena Hecker in her address to members attending the 1999 Annual Meeting of the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario. With reference to restructuring in the past year, Hecker noted that these two things - teamwork and communications - "... will pull it all together and ensure a smooth running organization."

Hecker thanked everyone for their patience and understanding during this year of transition. It was a challenging year for everyone - Branch members, Provincial Advisory Councillors, Coordinators, and the Provincial Board - remarked Hecker. "But we survived!" she stated. "The Women's Institute can only go forward because every WI member wants the same thing. The best, the very best for the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario."

The upcoming year - 1999-2000 - sees a new President, President-Elect and Education Coordinator, four new Board Directors and nine new Provincial Advisory Councillors. "What a way to start a new millennium," Hecker stated, "new faces, with fresh ideas!"

Coordinator's Reports

Education

Mary Lou Norton, outgoing Education Coordinator, reported that her four years in this position were "a unique experience unlike no other." She proudly reported that 48 *PHONEBUSTERS* meetings had been organized in the Eastern and Western regions of Ontario, and that 4200 citizens were now better informed about the dangers of telemarketing or phone fraud. She stressed the recognition of Branch projects, whether it was serving food at fairs, knitting cuddle bears for Alzheimer patients or entering a float in a local parade. "Every project brings about a change," she remarked.

The newly elected Education Coordinator is Joan King from Camlachie, near Sarnia. You will be hearing more from Joan in future issues of the *Home & Country*.

Lobbying

Lobbying Coordinator Anne Dyas updated Annual Meeting delegates with respect to two resolutions passed at August Board. The resolution requesting clear labelling on all foods containing genetically modified components was sent to Prime Minister Jean Chretien, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Lyle Vanclief, and other appropriate offices. Dyas noted that no response was received to date. With regard to monetary compensation for Merchant Navy veterans, the Hon. George Baker responded that he was preparing a resolution to present to Parliament.

Resolutions Sustained

Seven resolutions were received with either insufficient supportive material or the Lobbying Committee felt that the subject would be better addressed locally or by a letter campaign. Dyas emphasized that when a resolution is returned reasons and positive suggestions are provided. The following two resolutions were sustained by voting delegates to the annual meeting:

- that FWIO request the Federal Government and the Federal Minister of Justice, the Hon. Anne McLellan, to continue to uphold the law as written that one must not be in possession of child pornography
- that FWIO request that the Board of the Associated Country Women of the World seriously consider and endeavour to implement teleconferencing, and other state of the art modes of communication, for committee members in the next triennium

Recommendation

The Lobbying Committee requested that FWIO encourage the membership to write letters to the Ontario Minister of Education Janet Lynne Ecker and their local MPP, School Association and District Boards when they have a concern regarding any aspect of the present school curriculum. It is felt that individual letters more suitably address the concerns of the membership and give them the power to make a difference. Also, it is believed that a number of individual letters carry greater weight than a single letter from the provincial Lobbying Coordinator.

Public Relations

This past year, the Public Relations Coordinator (PRC), Carol Helfenstein, reported promoting the Women's Institute in press releases via email to a number of daily and weekly newspapers, farm magazines and radio and TV stations. Press releases have promoted FWIO initiatives, including *PHONEBUSTERS*, the Health Program and the Excellence in Agriculture Award presented at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair each November. Helfenstein commended Public Relation Assistant Joe Ann Lane's dedication to maintaining the FWIO



ABOVE

The Board of Directors from left to right in the back row are Pat Salter, Ruth Crump, Faith Nelms, Fran Farrell, Donna Willows, Angele Oberg and Elsie Stephenson. Seated from left to right are Arthena Hecker - Past President, Christine Reaburn - President, and Dianne Orr - President-Elect.



AT LEFT

The Coordinators standing from left to right are Anne Dyas - Lobbying and Lynn Ruigrok - Finance. Seated from left to right are Rosella Clancy - Tweedsmuir, Carol Helfenstein - Public Relations and Joan King - Education.

Web Site and uploading information on a regular basis. As PRC Helfenstein hopes to create "stronger communications links, tied in with new technologies," between FWIO and Branches, Districts and Areas.

Tweedsmuir History

"I'll be entering the new millennium with renewed enthusiasm for recording and sharing," remarked Tweedsmuir History Coordinator Rosella Clancy. She encouraged members to obtain a copy of *Our Millennium - A Catalogue of Possibilities* (see page 9, Summer 1999 issue); Clancy noted that a special heritage section offers a myriad of ideas for communities to mark this epic occasion. As a millennium project and "the grand finale" to her term, Clancy is launching a new project entitled "Grandma and Grandpa's Treasures." The idea is to create a pictorial coverage of the treasures in one's home, providing documentation about their origin, age and acquisition. Watch for details in future issues.

Finance

Finance Coordinator Lynn Ruigrok updated Annual Meeting delegates on the Budget, Marketing, Personnel and Fundraising committees. She thanked the Budget Committee for their commitment to arrive at a balanced budget. The Marketing Committee introduced three new products - a

postcard, the 2000 pocket calendars and the 1999 Christmas ornament. Ruigrok was pleased to report that 250 centennial plates were sold due to their reduction in price. The Personnel Committee had a busy year in addition to normal contract and work reviews; they hired a Health Program Coordinator and a Fundraiser.

Committees of the Board

Erland Lee (Museum) Home

Shirley Woodburn, Erland Lee Committee member, reported an 18 per cent increase in visitation numbers to the Lee Home. Curator Michael Gemmill's efforts to increase the Museum's profile in the community via local papers and radio stations has paid off, noted Woodburn.

Some of the projects carried out at the Lee Home included: overhauling the Museum's educational program and distributing it to the Hamilton Public School Board; producing a video tour of the Home; reorganizing the storage area; cataloguing the library; and, planning new exhibits and events, such as the Quilt Show and the Heritage Homes Fall Colours Tour.