

Board Briefings

Nov. 30 - Dec. 2, 1998

"Let's all do the best we can for the Women's Institute in our deliberations," stated Arthena Hecker, President of the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario (FWIO), in her opening remarks at the annual meeting. Hecker made this statement in the wake of great change that was to come about in the days that followed as the newly restructured Board of Directors, the Provincial Advisory Council (PAC) and Coordinators would become operational.

The November Board meeting in Guelph, noted Hecker, "is an historic time in the life of FWIO." The first two days of the meeting was the last time the Board met under the long familiar structure of Board Directors and Executive; the Board that met on Wednesday consisted of 11 Board Directors, including the President, President-Elect and Past President.

"If we want this new structure to work, it will," remarked Hecker. "We should be the driving force and look to the future with optimism and enthusiasm," she added.

To reinforce the implementation of the new structure, several officers offered their vision of the organization in the future. The following are some extracts of this visioning process:

"I would like to see the provincial Board of Directors all using email, and the Provincial Office and the President using scanners so that all information would be available to the full Board. What a boon to communications!"

- Arthena Hecker, President

"Every Branch should know which resolutions are being worked on. They need to know how it relates to their own area and to be in contact with their MPP or the proper authority. The Branch needs to advise the provincial Lobbying Coordinator so in her discussions of the resolution on Parliament Hill she can be assured that there are 11,000 women behind it. Yes, I did say Parliament Hill."

- Arthena Hecker, President

"My dream is for a Women's Institute Club where Board, committees and all members could stay at a reasonable cost. The Club would offer bed and breakfast, along with facilities for meetings, workshops, relaxation and fellowship. I have a dream that the *Home & Country* newsletter will be publish-

ed six times a year. I also have a dream that the Marketing Committee will branch out into ever expanding items, such as "How to" books. This committee will be so successful through sale outlets and book stores that there will be sufficient funds to consider a WI Club and publishing our newsletter six times a year."

- Christine Reaburn,
President-Elect

"Women's Institute has the potential to be extremely relevant to today's society, just as it was in Adelaide Hoodless' day. The Public Relations Coordinator will need to use clear communication, both verbal and written, using all the technology available today - including the *Home & Country*, the Internet, radio, television and the print media - to get the message out. The message needs to be about current innovative projects and creative programs. This message will encourage new members to get involved with WI. 'Build it - they will come.'"

- Mary Janes,
outgoing Public Relations Officer

"The vision of the Education Committee is to promote one theme for the organization which is concise and illustrates our purpose and education goals. A suggestion is "Women's Health and Education." Known as a "hook," the public would connect "Women's Health and Education" with the Women's Institute. Other examples of organizational hooks are Rotary Clubs and crippled children, The Shriners and burn centres and the Lions Club and eyes. The "hook" would never change eliminating confusion among the membership."

- Mary Lou Norton,
Education Coordinator

"The Consumers Association of Canada in partnership with the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada, and that includes you, have a vision to improve the literacy skills of Canadians. Hopefully we can make a difference by participating in this project."

- Donna Russett,
FWIO Executive Officer to FWIC

Resolutions Sustained

Leila Pettigrew, the outgoing provincial Resolutions Convenor, stated that she felt the Women's Institute should focus on specific areas of interest with regards to resolutions. She also noted that a delegation or spokesperson meeting with MPPs on Parliament Hill has a great deal more impact than writing a letter.

The following resolutions were sustained at the 1998 November annual meeting:

- that the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario (FWIO) approach the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Natural Resources to make available reason-

ably priced tests on drinking water so that toxins may be discovered before serious health hazards are experienced

- that FWIO request the Government of Ontario and the Ministry of Transportation to prohibit Long Commodity Vehicles (LCVs) from driving on Ontario highways
- that FWIO support the Multiple Organ Retrieval and Exchange (MORE) program through publicity
- that FWIO lobby the applicable elected bodies to use the established emergency fund intended to resolve environmental hazards as soon as they become known and litigate the cost of clean-up after the hazard has been removed
- that the FWIO lobby the ministries of the Federal Government to maintain responsibility for a safe food supply for Canadians by providing the funding necessary for effective testing and research of our food supply by qualified persons at arms length from private interests
- that FWIO urge the Ontario Minister of the Environment to end any agreement with Norampac Incorporated to stop the spreading of the product known as Dombind and Timbind on municipal roads
- that FWIO urge the Ontario Minister of Health to adopt a procedure whereby the Ontario Health Card is electronically imprinted upon a medical receipt which must outline all health procedures and related costs to each participating party, be they patient, insurance carrier or provincial treasurer; such a receipt is to be signed by the patient and attending physician with a copy to go to the patient, the physician's file and the provincial file
- that the FWIO urge the Ontario Ministry of Education and Training to give separate consideration for District School Boards, under the School Accommodation Funding Formula, so as to allow District School Boards to run rural schools efficiently and keep rural schools open, resulting in rural students receiving an equitable education in their community schools

Financial Matters

Faith Nelms, Board Director for Subdivisions 2 and Chair of the FWIO Finance Committee was thanked for the tremendous amount of work she had done in preparing the proposed budget for 1998-1999. Membership should know that in the last two years, FWIO has set and adhered to a balanced budget.

However, the auditors letter addressed to Board Directors stated: "The membership and consequently the membership fees of the FWIO have declined. The result is that each year it is a struggle to maintain the General Fund in a profitable manner. This year, the timing of the fee payments was accelerated in order to improve the cash flow of the General Fund. However, this is a short-term solution only. The long-term focus should be on attracting new members or increasing revenues from other sources (ie. items for resale, etc.) in order to ensure the long-term viability of the FWIO."

At the next Board of Director's meeting the FWIO budget will be reviewed and discussed in detail. The Provincial Advisory Council and Board were reminded to review existing committees and decide if members are getting value for the amount of money allocated to that committee's budget. David Juniper, an Investment Executive with Scotia McLeod, spoke to Board and answered questions about the organization's investments. A motion was passed by the Board on Wednesday that FWIO hire an FWIO Fund Raiser.

Remember, donations given to the General Fund can be used for operating. A point of interest - for the first time since its establishment, it was not necessary to use any of the interest from the Headquarters Fund for general operating because of prudent budgeting. The 1998 fees are held in an investment account for operating expenses from October 1 to June 30, 1999.



The new Board of Directors - from left to right in the back row are Vera Miner, Rosemary Moran, Marg Harris, Arthena Hecker, Christine Reaburn and Donna Willows. Seated from left to right are Margaret Wilton, Pat Salter, Billie Power, Elsie Stephenson and Faith Nelms.