

Pot Pourri

By Mary Janes

"For our organization to continue to grow and to work towards our goals we cannot rest on our laurels of past achievements. We must keep the best of the past to work towards the best in the future. That's the way Adelaide would have done it!"

- Source Unknown

Improving Communications

The following are some ideas on how to improve communication within the Women's Institute:

- use email or a WI computer chat line
- members can give questions to the delegates who represent them at meetings in advance; delegates then report back to the Branch with the answers
- invite local Area Chairs, District Presidents, Board Directors, Provincial Advisory Council members and provincial Coordinators to Branch meetings
- have a chart of all levels of the organization (from Branch to international) for all members; include this as part of the FWIO presentation folder
- keep absent members current with a phone call after the meeting; the telephone committee could take on this responsibility
- deliver *Home & Country* newsletters to absentees immediately following the meeting at which they are distributed, by delegating the responsibility to a close neighbour, or find some other convenient method
- each Branch should subscribe to *Federated News* and *The Countrywoman* and appoint a member to report on highlights at Branch meetings; rotate this responsibility with each issue
- the Secretary can draw attention to articles in the *Home & Country* when it is distributed at a meeting

"What matters most to Canadians of all generations is good parenting, dependable role models, happiness at home and at work, relationships."

- from a Maclean's magazine poll, Dec. 97

Isn't this what WI is all about — working together shaping tomorrow's world.

From FWIO members:

- recognition/appreciation ideas that Branches use include presentations of years of service pins, life membership certificates and badges, Certificates of Merit, honorariums, key chains or pens, Friends of WI Certificates, Erland Lee Awards or other volunteer award nominations and letters of thanks and appreciation
- to celebrate WI Week in February, develop a promotional campaign using the media and the WI jingle; use this week as a building block for recruitment in May
- encourage WI members to display "WI Member Lives Here" signs in their yards and "For Home & Country" stickers in their car windows
- have a category at the fall fair: for example - photos of flowerbeds in WI colours or using the WI logo or a blue and yellow cup and saucer flower arrangement competition
- distribute monthly Subdivision newsletters that are the joint work of the District Public Relations Officers; highlight Branch happenings, upcoming events, chit chat, member profiles, workshops and orientation sessions; develop a network of WI members working together at a local level
- each Branch can provide its members with professional looking business cards created easily on a computer

From the National Federation of Women's Institutes of England, Wales, Jersey, Guernsey and the Isle of Man:

- at each meeting they have "stalls" so each member can sell her wares - crafts, baking and jams (etc.); 10% of the proceeds go to the WI, the rest to the seller
- displays and exhibits strengthen the speaker's presentation at meetings
- there are special interest group meetings (ie. sports, crafts, gardening, etc.) between monthly general meetings
- each WI member belongs to a village community group to "reach out" or "network" with others
- dues of £12.5 (approx. \$25 Cdn) are split in half; half goes to the local Branch and the other half to the other levels of the WI; branches also fund raise in a variety of ways (jumble sales, bazaars and coffee mornings)
- the National Federation provides life skills education - money management, computer skills, awareness of new legislation, public speaking, conducting meetings and awareness of the world-wide organization

From the Women's Institutes of Nova Scotia (WINS):

- the "Do Something Special Project" is an award to recognize the Branch demonstrating outstanding efforts towards increased community awareness of WI; the award is a gift item for each member from the provincial supply order form
- the WINS Alumni Association of past provincial Board members meet annually (not at the provincial convention) to discuss WI concerns and solutions and to socialize

Mary Janes is the outgoing Public Relations Officer for FWIO.

A South of the Border Perspective:

Canada's climate is nine months winter and three months late in the fall.

-Evan Esar