

# Board Briefings

March, 1998

**F**ederated Women's Institutes of Ontario (FWIO) President Arthena Hecker welcomed Board Directors to their first provincial meeting of 1998. Before making decisions, she reminded Board Directors to carefully consider what is best for the organization to keep it as strong in this century as in the past.

In her report to Board, Arthena emphasized communication. She encouraged each member to "let their thoughts and views be known." She stressed that only by communicating with their Board Director, with the provincial Executive and President can ideas be discussed and acted upon.

The FWIO Board participated in two interactive workshops at the March Meeting. Lori Jamieson, a freelance writer and editor from Cambridge, provided Board members with numerous pointers and techniques to help them organize and prepare for presentations. She opened by cautioning Board not to confuse worry with preparation. Just because you've been thinking about and dreading a presentation, doesn't mean you have been preparing for it. Some of the many pointers Lori spoke about are presented on page 9.

Stuart Budd, Rural Community Advisor with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, conducted a mock meeting at Board as a means to help answer the many questions regarding the newly adopted Canadian guide, *Procedures for Meetings and Organizations* by

Kerr and King. (In 1997, FWIO voted to replace Bourinot's Rules of Order.) Stuart noted that procedures are necessary to ensure that:

- the right of the minority be heard;
- the right of the majority prevails;
- every member has an equal voice and vote; and,
- only one topic is considered at a time.

He reminded Board that if a particular procedure is already stated in the constitution or by-laws of the organization, then that is what members follow. Kerr and King is to be used as a guide only, and each organization uses their own judgement as to how much is right for them.

Test your parliamentary procedures knowledge and try the quiz on page 8.

## Information Items

### Public Relations Officer

One of the most commonly asked questions of the PRO is, "What are we doing about our declining numbers and our future?" Mary Janes, the FWIO PRO, said she responds with the following: "We are aware of the problem; we have new brochures, a radio jingle, a system of membership organizers and strategic alliances with other organizations to raise awareness of our own. She also tells reporters about the 'quiet work' of the WI in their communities and about WI accomplishments and about how they are getting into the media through interviews and news releases to talk about issues."

But, she wonders if this is enough?

As she has done in the past, Mary Janes stressed that the Board must plan for Public Relations to be an integral part of the organization, and not a volunteer position. Recognizing the need to keep promotional material current, recognizing the need to have the WI in the public eye on a regular basis, recognizing that recruitment is a top priority, knowing that it takes time to build relationships, knowing that the display boards and brochures will need to be changed to reflect the revised vision and mission statements and focus changes - the costs of promotion are considerable. The work is full-time. She stated that knowing what is expected of the PRO, she could not, in all honesty, recommend it to any volunteer that she knows in the WI.

### Partnership Agreements

The Board was reminded of the following partnership agreements with FWIO:

- Community Abuse Program of Rural Ontario (CAPRO)
- Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association of Canada (PMAC)
- Osteoporosis Society of Canada (OSC)
- Ontario Breast Screening Program (OBSP)

These groups agreed to partner and work with FWIO presenting educational programs throughout Ontario. The challenge was made in November to all members, Branches, Districts and Areas to initiate at least 100 programs in 1998 with each of these partners. Let us help inform women and communities. For information on each of these programs see pages 8 and 9 of the Fall 1997 issue of the *Home & Country*.

### Program Themes

1. "Safety- How to Make Your Communities Safe"

Programs, projects and resource information on the Safe and Healthy Communities theme can be found in the gold-coloured insert that came with your Winter 1996-97 *Home & Country*. Page 3 recommended "Safety - How to Make Your Communities Safe" as this year's theme. Call the FWIO Office for a copy. Or ask your Branch Secretary for this insert, or an update to this insert mailed to your Branch in a January 1998 mailing.

2. "Arts, Crafts and Hobbies"

This second theme was approved at the 1997 November Annual Meeting. Branches are asked to organize an "Arts, Crafts or Hobbies" Workshop and invite people of all ages from their community to join in.

### Erland Lee (Museum)

The Curator of the Erland Lee (Museum) Home, Mary Kneebone, resigned this past spring. The position is advertised on page 16. The Home was given notice about the widening of Ridge Road. FWIO President Arthena Hecker and the Erland Lee Committee have met with Stoney Creek Council to discuss how to minimize disruption to the Museum. Branch Secretaries - Ask your District for your copy of the upcoming events at the Lee Museum.

### Convention '97

Peggy Knapp, Chair of the Convention '97 Committee, gave her final report. She remarked that the best possible final reports anyone in 100 years could have of the Convention is the Commemorative Booklet and Video. Several pages of recommendations were compiled for use by FWIO and FWIC in the planning of future conferences/conventions. Hiring professionals to undertake all contract negotiations and fund raising are among the recommendations to be considered.

### ACWW

Peggy Knapp also gave her final report as Associated Country Women of the World Area President for Canada. She said it was an honour and a privilege to be the Canadian representative. She noted that at the ACWW meetings, one does not vote as a Canadian, one votes for the best for ACWW and for what does the most for the most people. She stressed to Board that when you have the opportunity to see what the women in third world countries go through, you can count your blessings.

### Make May Membership Month!

Lorna McGrath, FWIO Membership Coordinator, and Mary Janes, FWIO PRO, encouraged Board Directors to "Make May Membership Month." Help with this recruitment/promotion blitz in order to develop enthusiasm and interest in Women's Institute and to find new members.

### Attention Branch PROs

Did you encourage each member in your Branch to walk for her health during the month of May?

Did you provide invitations to your Branch meeting so members could get out and walk to deliver one to a friend, neighbour or relative?

Did you record how far each member walked, how many invitations were delivered and how many were accepted?

Don't forget to compile the results and send them to the District PRO before the end of June, so she can send them to the Area PRO. The Area PRO will then send her tabulations to the Provincial PRO by August 1. The Fall issue of *Home & Country* will report the results.