

Board Briefings

August, 1997

Dinner speakers at the FWIO Board of Directors meeting in Ironbridge included Ted Linley, Reeve of Ironbridge, Bud Wildman, MPP for Algoma, and Brent St. Denis, MP for the riding of Little Current. All three politicians addressed the topic of lobbying to get action on issues. All three noted the importance of personal contact, meeting elected representatives face-to-face to discuss concerns.

Mr. Linley encouraged the Women's Institutes to talk to municipal governments and to local school boards. He stated, "The Women's Institutes need more than ever to be guardians of society, to be a watchdog in all areas." He also warned that "volunteers burn out; be careful in how much you do."

Short, signed, well-thought out letters can also be effective, according to Mr. Linley. Bud Wildman added that personal letters are effective because they indicate that the sender has considered the topic, thought out the issue and expects a response to her concern. He noted that form letters are not very effective, whether hand-written or mechanically reproduced.

Petitions are generally ineffective as well, because they may be signed in a hurry, just to get rid of the petitioner. Mr. Wildman noted that telephone calls are also less effective than letters.

Both Wildman and St. Denis encouraged the WI to send a delegation regularly to parliament to meet with as many political representatives as possible. The delegation should focus on two or three issues - prepare

briefs and summarize them briefly - to start a dialogue. Briefs need to be clear, concise and constructive in their criticism, providing possible alternatives to issues. Mr. St. Denis stressed the importance of regularly scheduled meetings with politicians - preferably yearly, to develop a routine and a relationship. It is most important to keep pushing to get resolutions passed; the Women's Institute should not give up at the first rejection of an idea.

A guest speaker from Bell Canada, Kim McCann, also joined August Board to discuss changes to the rural telephone and billing systems. A heartfelt thank you to Bell for their \$200 donation towards the Tuesday luncheon.

INFORMATION ITEMS

Program Coordinator: Information Kits about the four groups FWIO has partnered with (see Notes from the Program Coordinator's column (on page 8) for more details on these partnerships) were made available to Area Program Coordinators. As well, a new form was made available at August Board for Branches, Districts and Areas to fill out regarding their involvement with these four different organizations. Ask your Board Director for a copy.

Public Relations: During the Hamilton Convention, there was diverse media coverage - newspapers (Chicago Tribune, Montreal Gazette, Hamilton Spectator, Western Producer, Voice of the Farmer), television (Cable 14, ONTV) and radio (Radio Canada International). Many thanks to Lynn Lodge of Arkell who worked long hours in the media room and office during the Convention. She wrote the two-page Convention news release which was distributed across Ontario (225 copies) and made sure it was available to all the provinces before they left the Convention.

Membership Coordinator: Please note - the Branch formed in the Simcoe Area as reported in the Summer 1997 *Home & Country* has changed their name slightly, from West Shore Centennial to West Shore.

Conference '98: Conference '98 will be held at Loyalist College in Belleville from July 3 to 5, 1998. Watch for more details in future issues.

Constitution Committee: This Committee attended a workshop on July 7 facilitated by Stuart Budd and Bonnie O'Neill of the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. The outcome was an outline for an updated, clear and concise, "user-friendly" Constitution/Handbook. A completion date or the cost has not yet been finalized. Input is welcome from all members.

Convention '97: Almost 800 people attended the full Convention from June 17 to 22; 1,449 gobbled up the food at the Gage Park outdoor celebration; and, 1,960 sat down to the International Dinner at the Armouries. The Financial Statement is not yet complete, but the books will be audited and included with FWIO's Annual Financial Report to the November meeting. A final Convention '97 Report will be forthcoming at the annual meeting.

History Book Committee: Chair Jane Croft reported that *A Guide for Group Discussions* compiled by Mary Janes is intended to facilitate discussion of the content of *For Home and Country: The Centennial History of the Women's Institutes in Ontario*. She noted that it "is a well-executed, stimulating exercise ... and a wonderful way to encourage our members to really think about WI." Copies of the *Guide* can be purchased from the FWIO Provincial Office for \$3 (includes shipping and handling). Having completed their task of producing a Centennial History, this Committee will be dissolved and the sale of the book will become the responsibility of the FWIO Marketing Committee.

Marketing Committee: The Marketing Committee met to develop a uniform policy for the sale of items from the Provincial Office. Current pricing of items were reviewed to ensure that the cost of the product, taxes, shipping and handling and the creation of any original artwork and dies were built in. A list of this Committee's responsibilities was approved by August Board.

Junior Women's Institutes: Representatives from nine of the ten JWI Branches felt that "Working Together Shaping Tomorrow's World" is a great vision statement for the organization. As a JWI fund raising project, logo pens are in the works. JWI will be distributing 2,000 copies of the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association of Canada booklets, *Knowledge is the best medicine*. A "news" release kit and video has been ordered for each Branch.

November Annual Meeting: The FWIO Annual Board Meeting will be held at the Ramada Inn in Cornwall from November 19 to 21, 1997. Wednesday, November 20 is open to all members. To register contact Faith Nelms at (613)258-3055; the deadline is October 29, 1997.

FINANCIAL DISCUSSIONS

Lynn Ruigrok, FWIO Executive Assistant/Bookkeeper, provided a statement of receipts and disbursements, outlined the cash position of the organization as of June 30, included an investment summary and an explanation of all designated funds. She was asked to look into the following motion: that FWIO contact Revenue Canada to expand their present charitable status to cover all donations.

Under the Chair, Joe Ann Lane, there was considerable discussion about the member at large on the Finance Committee (see page 5 for qualifications). This is an elected position. Applicants must provide a presentation at the annual meeting. Applications are due November 1.

The Finance Committee recommendation to support the Ontario 4-H Foundation as a charter member was carried, as were the finance related Notices of Motion as outlined on page 5 of the Summer 1997 issue of *Home & Country*. The proposed 1997-1998 Budgets were accepted.

FWIO Tartan for Sale



Place your order based on the following:

Metres: _____ x \$60.00 = _____

Shipping/Handling = \$5.00

Subtotal = _____

7% GST on Subtotal = _____

Total = _____

Mail your order and cheque payable to the FWIO to the Provincial Office at 7382 Wellington Rd. 30, RR 5, Guelph ON N1H 6J2, Phone: (519)836-3078, Fax: (519)836-9456.