

## THE ART OF PUBLIC RELATIONS (PART 2)

# Convincing The Public



*"Public relations is the art of inspiring our members to feel great about the organization to which they belong and the art of convincing the public that our organization is a good one with which to be involved."*

In the last newsletter, I discussed the art of inspiring our members. In this column, I will address the art of convincing the public they should get involved with our organization.

### News Releases

The most commonly thought of public relations tools with which to reach the public are news releases. Some possibilities that are forgotten are columns advertising upcoming events and public service announcements on radio and television. All of these methods must answer the questions who, what, where, when and why to be of interest. If well presented, they are an effective method of publicizing the work of the organization.

### Brochures

Pamphlets and brochures are very useful for promoting an organization. Colourful and well-written, they may attract enough attention to induce a stranger to come to a meeting uninvited. On the downside, these can also be easily dismissed by anyone who is distracted, in a hurry, or too busy to pay attention.

### Displays

Other tools are displays, jingles and paid advertisements in the media. Sometimes, these are overlooked by Women's Institute members because they take longer to prepare and cost more.

Creators of display boards plan a message that will take about thirty seconds to read, because that is the average amount of time a passer-by will spend looking at it. The display has to be eye-catching, informative and to the point to be effective.

### Radio Sound Images

Radio sound images, commonly known as jingles, also need to grab the attention of the listener quickly and present a concise message. They are most effective when they are repeated over and over, so that the message stays in one's mind. Infectious music and a simple message are the key.

The new Women's Institute jingle has eight

short lines, two of which are repeated. The image presented is that of a vital, modern organization, a group that has varied interests, a group that provides leadership.

*"It's your life; it's your day  
The Women's Institute leading the way.  
We're about the future, and about the past  
Making a difference  
And we're growing fast.  
It's your life: it's your day  
The Women's Institute leading the way  
-for Home and Country."*

Wouldn't you like to be part of this great organization?

All these tools of public relations - news releases, pamphlets, displays, advertisements - project an image of an organization. The image projected is the first impression a person has of the group that is being represented. That image is what will either encourage membership or bring about the downfall of the organization.

### Attitude

The most common answer to the question "Why did you come to a meeting of the WI?" is "A neighbour asked me." A personal invitation is an extremely effective way of marketing our organization to the public. The first impression can make a world of difference in what a person thinks of Women's Institute. That is why enthusiasm and a positive approach are so important.

What happened at your meeting the last time your Branch had a guest? Did she feel a part of the group? If she was introduced to two or three people with whom she had some common interests, she probably felt at ease.

Was she given some information about the Women's Institute to help her understand what was being discussed during the business - a presentation folder, a Handbook, a fact sheet? Was she ignored, or was she treated as you would like to be treated? The answers to these questions give a good indication of whether that guest would like to come to another meeting or even join the Branch.

Positive personal contact is probably the most effective public relations tool available to any organization. It is also the least expensive. Combined with enthusiasm, some attractive promotional material and interesting programs to involve people, a complete public relations program can inspire the membership and convince the public of the worth of the Women's Institute.

*Mary Janes is the Public Relations Officer for the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario. She can be reached at 6868 Egremont Rd., RR 8, Watford ON NOM 2S0, (519)786-5511.*

### What's Important to You?

- The five most important words:  
"I am proud of you."
- The four most important words:  
"What is your opinion."
- The three most important words:  
"If you please."
- The two most important words:  
"Thank you."
- The least important word: "I."

*Submitted by Pat Barnes, PRO, Kingston Area.*