



From the Heart

By
Marg Harris

You did a great job! Thank you, Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario (FWIO) Conference '96 Planning Committee from Southwestern Area. You arranged a meaningful Women's Institute Conference in Ridgetown for all of us. To hear the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada (FWIC) President, Charlotte Johnson, and Associated Country Women of the World Area President for Canada, Peggy Knapp, was our privilege. All those who came, went away knowing it was good to have been there. We all gain value when we give something of ourselves. All involved with FWIO Conference '96, did just that.

Grace phoned. "I have a cheque for you for our Women's Institute." And Evelyn and her husband celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary. They suggested, if desired, gifts

could be to the FWIO Headquarters Fund. And so the dollars come in. Many thanks to all. Have you noticed the increase in donations? Bob the Beaver, too, is healthier and happier because of your generosity.

How was your summer? Quite wonderful? My husband, Bud, wants to know why winters are so long and summers are so short. How can it be explained to him?

As we prepared to go to August Board, I reflected on our hard working, diligent and appreciated Executive, who share in my priorities. It is important at all meetings that members' questions about our organization and its activities be asked and answered. We must always remember:

- to be financially prudent and responsible;
- to be open;
- to ask ourselves prior to a vote, "With the knowledge I now have, what is the best decision for our organization;" and,

- to abide by the will of the majority after the vote is taken.

This time at Board, Arthena Hecker, President-Elect, facilitated a working meeting on the Women's Institutes Business Plan. Answers are not easy. I have great faith in our FWIO Board. Your elected representatives are astute and ascertaining. There will be good dialogue as the path is chosen.

Your FWIO Board Directors are special and giving people. You chose your representatives well. They give tirelessly of their time, talents, energies and wisdom for this demanding position. We ask so much of our volunteers. Let us say "thank you" loud and often.

I anticipate attending, and visiting with you, at your Area Conventions. To do so, Past President Donna Russett says, is the highlight of a President's year. I look forward to hearing about the many happenings in Ontario's Women's Institutes.

With confidence, enthusiasm, gratitude and a unique vibrancy, we anticipate our future years. It is an exciting time for all!

Marg Harris is the President of the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario. She can be reached at RR 3, Kerwood ON NOM 2B0, Phone: (519)247-3695, Fax: (519)247-3921.

WI Meets with Government Minister

President Marg Harris and Public Relations Officer Mary Janes met recently with Diane Cunningham, MPP for London North, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Women's Issues.

Topics discussed included resolutions, the "Safe and Healthy Communities" focus and the role of volunteers in today's society. The WI representatives emphasized the need for the Women's Institute and the government to work together. They suggested WI as a consultative group to assist the government in keeping in touch with local community concerns, women's issues and Canadian unity.

Ms Cunningham pointed out that resolutions are an excellent way for the government to know what the concerns of the people are. She emphasized the need to send resolutions to the appropriate ministries, to the opposition critics of those ministries, and to the local Members of Parliament. The local Member should be asked to do the follow-up to make sure that an issue is resolved to the satisfaction of a constituent or an organization.

Another way of keeping the lines of communication open is to invite Members of Parliament to meetings as speakers, not just to bring greetings. They should also be invited to business meetings where issues are being discussed, so that they can know the opinions of the public.

The WI is looking forward to future discussions with Ms Cunningham and other caucus members.

Submitted by Mary Janes, Public Relations Officer for the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario.

Hear ye! Hear ye!

By Lois Laughlin

In 1995, the Centennial Committee appointed a new group, the Centennial History Committee, to undertake an important task. Their mandate is to collect and record an historical summary of all the celebrations held to commemorate the 100th anniversary.

All Branches, Districts and Areas are to record their centennial projects and activities and then send them to this Committee. All items will be placed in a large notebook of archival quality to be on view at the FWIO Provincial Office. This worthwhile project will record all festivities held between January 1, 1997 to December 31, 1997. Please send your report of how your Branch celebrated the 100th anniversary to Leda Archer, 34 Lorne St., Elmvalle ON L0L 1P0.

Lois Laughlin is a member of the North River WI, Simcoe North District, and the Secretary of the Centennial History Committee.