



## From the Heart

By  
Marg Harris

It began well; the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario (FWIO) Board of Directors and Executive gathered at Crieff Hills Community Conference Centre on the evening of March 26 to begin their spring meeting. The weather was fine. But, during the night, heavy snows came. And, during the next days, some speakers could not. Board Directors rallied to the call. Snow was shovelled and boots were shared. A snowman greeted us at the conference hall door. We laughed and the meeting began. The agenda was carried through and Women's Institute business was tended to. When the meeting adjourned, cars needed to be pushed and started. We all got home safely. The March Board experiences were evidence, once again, of the Women's Institutes ability to deal with changes and challenges!

What have I done since that time? Well, I have been away from home 52 days since I last wrote you; the following is just a sample of some of the things I have done:

- contributed to the planning at several Conference '96 meetings; (great work was done in the planning of this Conference by the Southwestern Area; many thanks!);
- attended the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair (RAWF) Annual Meeting and became a Director; FWIO is a member organization of the RAWF and as FWIO's named representative, I was eligible for nomination;
- participated in the annual content planning meeting for the *Home & Country* newsletter;
- flipped pancakes at the Erland Lee (Museum) Home with Donna Russett, Past President, at their Pancake Days, (Yes, in spite of the heavy rain, we had a splendid time!);
- promoted our provincial theme of Safe and Healthy Communities by speaking with various WI groups and other organizations and government bodies;

- contributed to the visioning process of the Foundation for Rural Living, an organization which we have communicated with for some time;
- attended the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada (FWIC) Board Meeting as Senior Board Director, at which participants thoroughly enjoyed a presentation on Facilitating by your President-Elect Arthena Hecker; (Some FWIO resolutions were brought forward at FWIC, so watch for them in your copy of *Federated News*);
- represented FWIO at the Ontario Rural Child Care meeting (rural child care has been a major thrust for FWIO and FWIC for some time);
- participated at Convention '97 Executive and general meetings; and,
- chaired the Stoney Creek Charter Women's Institute Annual and Board of Directors Meeting.

And there have been many other meetings, anniversaries and special events as well. I was invited and went to the Manitoba Women's Institute Conference and the Quebec Women's Institute Convention. It was time well spent as I got better acquainted with our WI sisters and learned from their knowledge and experiences. My husband, Bud, was able to go and was also welcomed.

Tweedsmuir History Books are an important Women's Institute endeavour. The curators who collect and compile the pages of these Books do a marvellous deed. To preserve the story of our past for future generations is an unselfish and caring act. I extend a special thank you to all curators who have done and are doing Tweedsmuir work at all levels. Marcie Johnston's work will soon be completed. A new Provincial Curator is needed this November. Please consider taking on this unique opportunity.

Women's Day at the Skydome was another day to remember forever. The Blue Jays game was attended by just over 34,000 fans.

Nearly 2,000 Women's Institute members and their friends were present as Margaret McInroy of the Walton WI Branch sang the opening anthems. I threw the opening pitch and received an autographed ball. It, as well as our genuine thanks, goes to the Centennial Committee. Well done!

An Executive Committee meeting was held in Orillia on May 27 and 28. As I exited Highway 11, it was a thrill to see the FWIO flag flying in the breeze and the marquee sign welcoming us to the meeting site. A full agenda resulted in pages of minutes. Monday evening, Simcoe East hosted a reception for the FWIO Executive. We met many special Women's Institute members that evening. A taped interview by an Orillia Radio Station was aired the next day.

And, all the while myself and the Executive are busy, FWIO business is being tended to as the first priority and as the first obligation to you - the members. Many thanks to Janine, Lynn, Helen and Glenna who now staff our Provincial Office.

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### FWIO Area Convention Dates, 1996

AREA	DATE	LOCATION
Northern	Sept. 7	Powassan
North Western	Sept. 25-26	Dryden
North Central	Oct. 1-2	Ironbridge
Cochrane-Temiskaming	Oct. 4-5	
Grey-Bruce	Oct. 8	Hepworth (Legion)
Guelph	Oct. 9-10	Brussels
Simcoe	Oct. 16	Elmvale
Trent Valley	Oct. 17	Brighton
Central	Oct. 18-19	
JWIO Conference	Oct. 18-20	Near Madoc
Eastern	Oct. 21	Perth
Kingston	Oct. 22	Storington (Lions Club)
London	Oct. 24	St. Thomas
Hamilton	Oct. 28	
Southwestern	Oct. 29	Essex