

Unique Ideas for Promotion & Publicity

The best ideas for promotion and publicity often come from members. The following ideas have worked to gain new members, to increase the visibility of the Women's Institute in the community and to promote the work of the WI in general.

Jeanne Lambert, from the Bishop's Mills Branch in the Grenville District sent several items, including posters, meeting invitations, a newcomers guide and a special anniversary brochure, that her Branch uses for publicity. The most noticeable feature on all five items is that the same message is repeated. "The Bishop's Mills WI includes women of all backgrounds - working in business, working on farms, working with children, working at home, young, and young-at-heart, new residents and long-standing ones; consequently, our interests are varied. All visitors and new residents are welcome to attend our meetings."

The "newcomers guide" to the area helps strangers find and use local resources such as churches, recreation areas, schools, libraries and post offices. A clear map makes it easy to locate the particular facility required. The guide, which gives a contact telephone number for local 4-H clubs, Scouts and Guides, also includes information about Women's Institute meetings. Any newcomer receiving this pamphlet will feel most welcome to the community of Bishop's Mills.

The special "invitation to meetings" card is similar to a party invitation (date, time, location, topic, to be filled in) and is signed by the person doing the inviting. Included is a note stating "Call for directions or to be picked up." A written invitation can be as effective, or even more effective, than a telephone invitation.

Eastern Area has an interesting approach in publicizing Volume 2 of *Silver Thoughts, Golden Words & A Nickel's Worth of Stories*. They have used the outside border of the WI logo to frame all the pertinent information about the book and where to buy it. This makes a very attractive and eye-catching advertisement.

Several ideas have originated in the Trent Valley Area. Dorothy Hardnen comes from a District with only six Branches. The particular problem that these Branches experienced was getting information about their meetings in print in the local newspaper. To solve the problem, several members

arranged a meeting with the editor of the newspaper. Now, highlights of Branch meetings are sent to the District Public Relations Officer, who sends a monthly report of District events to the newspaper. This has been a very satisfactory resolution of a problem.

Prince Edward District in the Trent Valley Area has organized a very successful Art and Craft Sale for the last thirteen years. Members distribute many brightly coloured flyers for the event wherever they can. They also advertise the event through Tourism Ontario. Not only does this provide good exposure for the Women's Institute, but it is an excellent fund raiser for many District projects.

Brochures about local Branches or Districts are always useful as handouts at public events. Prince Edward District has a pamphlet which lists the mission statement of the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario, the activities a member can participate in, a map of where the Branches in the District are located and a contact telephone number. This pamphlet asks the question, "Would you like to belong to a group of women who are respected in the community, attend informative meetings and enjoy fun and fellowship?"

A similar handout recently made available by Warwick Women's Institute in Lambton North District - a colourful 8 1/2" x 11" sheet of paper folded in three - gives more specific details. As well as listing contact names and telephone numbers, it gives the roll call and details about the program for several meeting dates. This pamphlet includes the objectives of the Women's Institute and a brief history of the movement around the world.

British Columbia Women's Institutes Public Relations Officer Jean Johnson sent along a "table talker" - a small paper pyramid which is placed in public places such as restaurants and cafes. Prepared in the Institute colours, it can immediately be a focal point on the table and a conversation piece while a customer waits for her/his food.

Poster, invitations, media reports, pamphlets, flyers - there are as many ways of attracting attention with informative literature as there are WI members. Usually, all it needs is some initiative, a little brainstorming and a lot of desire to get the word out about the Women's Institute.

Not all members feel confident about their ability in written communication. Even so, each Women's Institute member is a public

relations officer in her own way. Frances Woolley, from Hamilton Area, shares:

TEN COMMANDMENTS OF A GOOD PRO

- Speak to people.
- Smile at people.
- Call people by name.
- Be friendly and helpful.
- Be cordial.
- Be interested in people.
- Be generous with praise.
- Be considerate of feelings.
- Be thoughtful of the opinion of others.
- Be alert to give service.

Note: examples of all of these materials are available from Mary Janes who is your PR - OOH!

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 N0M 2S0, Phone: (519)786-5511.

Four Calling Birds

The fourth in the Christmas tree ornament series - 'Four Calling Birds' - is now available from the FWIO Provincial Office. The ornament is inscribed with Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario, Seasons Greetings, 1996. The cost is \$5 each.

The ornaments will be available at Conference '96 and Area Conventions, so start your Christmas shopping early!

Note: There are about 100 ornaments available from 1993 with 'A Partridge in a Pear Tree' and from 1994 with 'Two Turtle Doves.' There are even more 1995's available with the 'Three French Hens.'

