

## Profile:



# What do beekeepers and Women's Institute members have in common?

By Mary Janes



Janine Roelens-Grant

Janine Roelens-Grant has been full-time Editor of the Federated Women's Institute's *Home & Country* since April, 1992, when the newsletter became independent of the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food (OMAF, now OMAFRA). Prior to this position, she had worked on the WI's *Home & Country* and on *The Enthusiast* (the 4-H provincial newsletter) for OMAF. That is the Women's Institute connection. The interest in bees came much earlier.

While studying at the University of Guelph, one of the jobs Janine and her husband, Gord, undertook was working for a commercial honey producer with about 2,000 colonies of bees in the area of Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan. They have actively continued their interest in bees and purchased their first few colonies in 1983. Today, they maintain 36 colonies and Gord is an Apiary Specialist with OMAFRA.

Janine's interest in bees, combined with her skills as an historian, led her to complete the research and writing of a manuscript on the history of the Apiculture Department at the University of Guelph and the history of beekeeping in Ontario. It was started by the late Gordon F. Townsend, Head of the Apiculture Department at the Ontario Agriculture College and Provincial Apiarist from 1940 to 1980. She is now at that critical stage of honing the fine points of her apiculture research and writing. Janine has a Combined Honors B.A. (History and Geography) from the University of Guelph and an M.A. in Public History from the University of Waterloo. She also worked for a number of years as a Researcher/Editor on various historical projects connected with the University of Guelph.

Janine's roots are in Essex County, the "Banana Belt" of Canada. She grew up in a large family and worked in agriculture-related jobs - picking peppers and green beans and working in tomato canning factories and greenhouse flowers. Janine says Essex County is an area she really misses. "It does my heart good to see those flat lands; I like the fact that you can see the houses and farms on the next concession." In fact, she feels that the Canadian Prairies "have breath-taking landscapes." Janine, Gord and three-year old

Matthew now live in Clifford in north Wellington County.

Her agricultural roots, her interest in social and women's history, her desire to research and write, and her enthusiasm for the Women's Institute organization make Janine a natural for the job as Editor of *Home & Country*. She remarked: "the position ... allows me to continue doing the things I enjoyed doing at University - researching, writing and editing - but for a different audience, a much more receptive (but no less critical) audience."

The editor's position has presented several challenges - learning desktop publishing and the print production process, developing a good relationship with people in the printing business, dealing with the newsletter's distribution (Canada Post) and building a rapport with the readership.

At the annual *Home & Country* Editorial Committee meeting, Janine's capable and organized direction was very evident. With her leadership, the Committee was able to plan in detail the contents of one year's issues of the newsletter, discuss and adjust the editorial policy and discuss the budget for the upcoming year in just two days. They also considered many other details, including colour, graphic content, paper cost increases, suggestions and concerns of readers and whether to include paid advertising.

The production schedule for the *Home & Country* allows for few delays. In order for the Branch Secretaries to have their bundles of the present Winter issue by January 1, the Editor had to have the content to the printer by December 1. Before that, she had gathered the stories, made sure the regular columns were written, chosen the photographs and collected information on current and upcoming events. Then she typed and edited all the copy, adding titles and planning layout. After this was done, she transferred everything to a desktop publishing program where the actual layout was created, including type styles and sizes, pull quotes, cutlines and keylines around photographs.

A graphic artist suggested improvements and changes in the layout to make it more appealing and easier to read. At this point,

the Editor, the Copy Editor and the Content Editor proofread it. Then, the Editor and the graphic artist created the artboards for the printer. After another review by the Editor, the newsletter was ready to go to the printer. The printer prepares a final proof (called a vandyke or blue line copy) and after a final check by the Editor, the newsletter went to print. Once the newsletter was printed and mailed, the Editor started writing letters of thanks and returning photographs.

Now the process will start all over again for the Spring edition. Janine spends over 1000 hours working on four sixteen-page editions of the *Home & Country* and her related duties.

Janine is not a Women's Institute member. She feels that she does not have the time to devote to Branch work because she gives freely of her time at the provincial level. Recently, she has collected and sorted hundreds of back issues of *Home & Country* that readers sent in, to provide three complete sets for use at the FWIO Provincial Office and at the Archives at the University of Guelph.

The Mapping Project, which she originated, has proven to be much more challenging than it first seemed. Mapping some of the borders, never recorded on a map before, became a major undertaking for the Mapping Project Committee and the Board Directors. It will be completed in the spring and will provide a map of all the Districts, Subdivisions and Areas for use by the Provincial Office and WI members.

The *Home & Country* is only one aspect of the public relations work of the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario. Other promotional material is always being produced to keep the image of the Women's Institute current and up-to-date. Janine has helped revise and update the "Calling All Women" pamphlet to complement the new focus on "Safe and Healthy Communities." She was also very active in helping to develop a new package of information to go in the presentation folder to promote the WI as a vibrant group of family and community-minded members.

Janine has volunteered her talents to the Convention '97 Committee for two projects. She will co-ordinate the historical exhibit area, composed of displays from each of the provincial newsletter editors. And, she will help produce a commemorative booklet of Convention '97 and the centennial events.

What do beekeepers and Women's Institute members have in common? - Janine Roelens-Grant, Editor of *Home & Country*, and yes, she obviously is "busy as a bee!"

Mary Janes is Public Relations Officer for the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario.