

# "SAFE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES"

By Lorna McGrath and  
Bonnie McGill-Ploeg

Women's Institutes have been interested in safe and healthy communities since their inception in 1897. Today, it is their main focus. Our challenge to members is to initiate 400 Branch projects by 1997, or 100 District projects, that will make our communities safer and healthier.

The "Safe and Healthy Communities" Seminar, held November 24 and 25 following the FWIO annual meeting in Guelph, provided opportunities for participants - to learn about resources available in their communities; to get excited about working with other community members who share similar concerns; and, to network as a group to avoid duplication and overlap of services. In addition to presentations by several guest speakers, many informative displays surrounded the conference room.

The first speaker was Katherine Pigott from the Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition. As a Community Animator, she is available to assist groups with the planning of projects that will promote a safe and healthy community. She suggested following the ACT formula - A for awareness, C for connecting and T for taking action.

Dominic D'Arcy, "The Singing Policeman" from Ottawa, entertained us with song's and stories. He has produced a video that shows teens how to cope with drugs by putting power in their own hands. One of his song' messages was of a united Canada. We were a flag-waving "bunch" as we sang the "Canada Song."

Anne Bernhardt talked of the Teen Esteem Program in Brantford. In this program, female role models from varying backgrounds encourage young girls, ages 11 to 13, to talk about the real world, goal setting, careers and educational opportunities.

Dr. Trevor Hancock, Public Health Consultant, advises all levels of government in Canada, plus the World Health Organization, about healthy communities and sustainable development. He spoke about involving youth in the solution. For example, allowing a youth group to decorate their own drop-in centre may help prevent vandalism of it. He used a group visionary exercise which can be used to find a common shared vision of a safe and healthy community. He advised us to pick a short-term, achievable project first, then move on to other projects to achieve long-term goals. Above all, he emphasized, don't get discouraged!

The Executive Director from The John Howard Society of Waterloo-Wellington, John Bilton, spoke about their work with people (primarily men) who have been in trouble with the law. The role of their volunteers is to visit, counsel and support. The Society is also involved with the VIP (values, influences and peers) Program for Grade 6 students and a program to help male batterers overcome their anger.

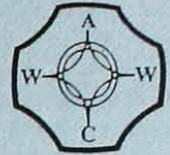
The wrap-up speaker was Kathy Simpson, Rural Community Advisor (RCA) with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Kathy explained that RCAs are available to help groups with rural development. She reinforced the idea that the Women's Institutes have been promoting safe and healthy communities for years. She led us through an exercise which helped us to define what projects could be implemented and how to get them started.

Seminar participants gained knowledge, resources and enthusiasm. Now, we need to bring groups of people with common interests together to get projects off the ground.

*Lorna McGrath is the Membership Coordinator for the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario. Both Lorna and Bonnie McGill-Ploeg are members of the Silver Maple WI.*

## ACWW - "Working with Women Worldwide"

By  
Peggy Knapp



### Council:

The Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW) Council dates have been set for June 2 - 7, 1996, at the Mariott Hotel in New Orleans, Louisiana. Open day will take place on June 3, with the actual Council meeting to take place from June 4 to 6.

### Conferences:

I invite all of you to participate in one of the two Area Conferences to be held in Canada in 1996. Both are in October, the first will be hosted by the Women's Institutes of British Columbia and Alberta in Edmonton, the second by the Women's Institutes of Newfoundland and Labrador in Gander.

The Triennial World Conference, hosted by South African Societies, will take place in April, 1998, at the University of Pretoria, with the theme "Shaping Tomorrow's World."

### Canada's Project in Uganda:

The support across Ontario for our own Canadian Project in Uganda has been overwhelming. The FWIO Provincial Office has now received \$4,800 to be used to establish a pigery, in which older AIDS orphans may work to produce meat and to purchase stock to increase the size of the goat herd and provide a dependable source of milk for the babies and younger children.

May I share with you a couple of illustrations to show the care and concern of our members: A cheque arrived at the office from a member with the following notation in the lower left-hand corner - "for milk for the babies." One Area Convention was able to pay for "half a goat," and across our province donations have been handed to me or slipped into my pocket. Sometimes, I have not even known the name of the donor.

Many thanks for the kindness and generosity in response to the first Canada Area ACWW Project.

*Peggy Knapp is the Associated Country Women of the World Area President for Canada. You can write to her at 61 Woodland Glen Dr., Guelph ON N1G 3S3.*

## Elevated to New Heights



*Working together with the entire community, the Solina Women's Institute Branch raised enough funds to have an elevator installed in their local hall. The Solina Community Hall is now more accessible to seniors and the disabled. The Solina WI Access Committee is pictured at the opening to the elevator; from left to right are Chris Voisey (Contractor), Alma Langmaid, Lois Yellowlees, Harvey Yellowlees, Jean Taylor (Chair), R.W. Bruynson (Architect) and Viola Ashton.*

*Submitted by Betty Grant, PRO, Solina WI, Durham West.*