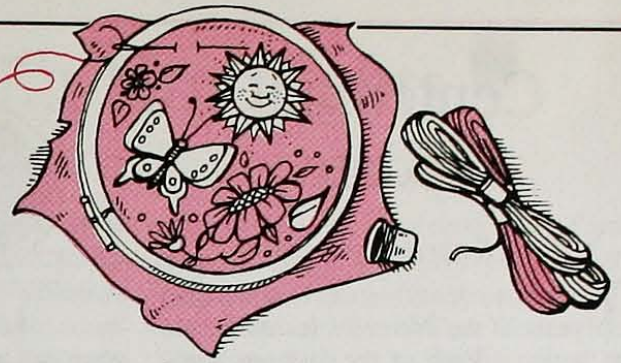


# Common Threads

By Donna Russett



**D**are to dream! Well, a dream has come true. We are now in our new provincial office, leased from Guelph Township who has completely refurbished the building for our use. March 28th was the moving date from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food premises, and Anna, Georgina, Janine and Helen are gradually getting themselves sorted out.

There are so many thank you's to be passed out! A special thank you to those members who have supported our Headquarters Fund. When you hear about Branch members selling pies at a July 1st celebration, organizing euchre parties in their community, catering, and holding special Institute Days to raise their share, it is heart-warming and gratifying.

Our Headquarter's Fund continues to receive donations and we WILL reach our goal. "Challenges can be ... stepping stones or stumbling blocks, it's how you handle them."

Many, many thanks must go to the Moving Committee. And to the volunteers who shopped for office furniture, assisted with the move, transported boxes and boxes of historical documents to the University of Guelph Archives, and arranged a shower for the new office.

Yes, a shower was held at the office on Tuesday evening, March 22nd. Present and past Board Directors and friends brought useful items for the office, bathrooms, and kitchen, toured the newly renovated facility and enjoyed fun, food and fellowship.

And now our official Grand Opening Celebrations Committee is well underway with their plans. We hope many of you will be able to share in the joy, excitement and history-making on August 21, 1994.

Remember, the common threads of en-

thusiasm, dedication and appreciation are what tie us together.

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We greatly appreciate all those who took the time to fill out and mail in the "We Can Make a Difference" questionnaire. To date, about 30 per cent have been returned, so we are very pleased. Analysis of the survey is taking place and the results will be published as soon as this process is completed. A special thanks to all the volunteers who stuffed envelopes in preparation for the mailing and the two committees who worked on the campaign.

*Donna Russett is the President of the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario.*

## Tips from a PRO

By Margaret Atkins

**S**pring - a time of renewal. Time to shed those winter blues and begin to develop new ideas to strengthen the Women's Institute movement. With the nearness of the 100th anniversary, we must advertise ourselves more than ever.

How can we accomplish this? First, as Branches, Districts and Areas, we must take the time to advertise all meetings and workshops. We should give personal invitations to all friends and neighbours and provide transportation when warranted. Have you given any thought to sponsoring a member?

Through Branch or personal sponsorship a potential member would be introduced to Women's Institute activities and would become motivated (we hope) to join the following year. If each Branch acquired a new member each year between now and

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the Centennial, we would have about 4000 new members!

If your Township has a newsletter ask for free space to advertise your events and/or meetings, stressing the time, place and the name and telephone number of a contact person. Has your Branch thought about compiling an introductory newsletter or brochure that outlines the Branch history and introduces the reader to the provincial organization? The Ashgrove Women's Institute has done a wonderful job in this area of advertising.

Advertise your programs. And, remember to keep the program material current. More women will take the time to attend

your meeting if the subject matter is up-to-date and of concern to them. We must change to meet the needs of our local area.

Board Directors - you are in the driving seat, so fuel and inject your members with enthusiasm and encouragement to lead our organization into new and current areas of involvement. To me, WI not only stands for Women's Institute, it reminds me that we are Women Involved - involved in our community, our country and our global village.

Remember, each one of us is a walking, talking advertisement for the Women's Institute. For 97 years, we have been in the background bolstering other people, communities and organizations. It is now time to Stand Up, Speak Out and Advertise Ourselves! It is Spring - a time of renewal for both the season and the Women's Institute organization.

*Margaret Atkins is the Public Relations Officer for the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario.*