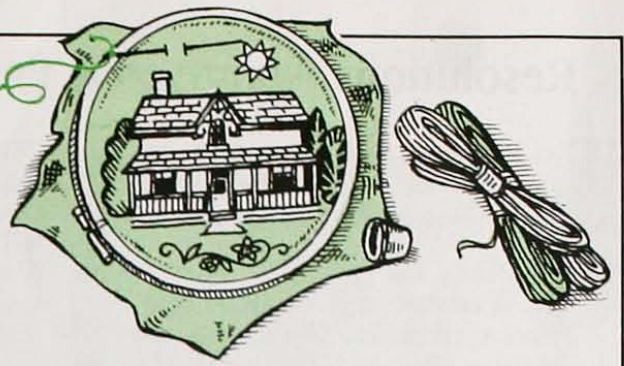


Common Threads

By Donna Russett



I have often thought of the Women's Institute organization as a sort of rural university offering inspirational training and skills to young and old alike - training and skills to develop personalities and talents, to help others, and to improve family and home life. Through the Women's Institute we can hear and do with others; we can develop friendliness and friendships.

We work and learn together to improve our minds and enrich our lives. We enjoy a variety of speakers, activities and outings. But the rate and level of learning is entirely up to each one of us. The Women's Institute is our organization - yours and mine - but it will only be what we make it.

We must rid ourselves of the idea that the Women's Institute is a cheap option. We belong to a huge, valuable organization providing us with a voice that can be heard. We have proven the value of our organization as a forum - representative of all political

parties, sects and classes in the community - for the discussion of questions of mutual interest. It is an organization that has given confidence, knowledge, fun, a sense of achievement and life long friendships to countless women.

As the Ontario Women's Institutes continue to work on their Strategic Plan - including attending conferences, initiating Train-the-Trainer Workshops, and encouraging local Education Committees to provide workshops or seminars relating to family life skills - our team strives to do what is best for our organization.

The excitement is building as we prepare to move into our new provincial office in the spring and as our Grand Opening Committee makes plans for the official opening on August 21st. We have experienced many great accomplishments and will continue to climb mountains and ford streams to reach our goals.

Let us move forward, not only as individuals, but as Branches, Districts, Areas and provinces, working together towards the same goals to ensure that the WI movement continues to attract, stimulate and speak for women. Let us also look to the future with excitement, dedication and awareness as we approach our Centennial in 1997 and take our organization into the 21st century.

As your new Provincial President I will strive to be the best that I can be with your help and understanding. The friendships I make and knowledge I gain will be my greatest rewards. After all, these are our common threads.

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

Headquarters Update

By Glenna Smith

By the time you read this report we will have moved or be close to moving into our new office. What an exciting time! Finally, after 97 years, we are taking the big step. We are leaving home. We will return for advice and some help, but we are really going to make it on our own.

Thanks to everyone who has sent donations for furniture. We are climbing the furniture ladder very quickly, but we are not over the top yet. All Memorial money that is designated furniture will be used for that purpose. Other Memorial money will be put into the Headquarters Fund.

Here is just one example of an enterprising way to support your Headquarters Fund. One of our members had a "Fresh" Roast Beef Dinner

for her fellow WI members and friends. She charged \$6, kept \$1 for the meat, and \$5 per guest was donated to the Headquarters. Let us hear about how you are raising money.

The Grand Opening of the office is planned for August 21st. But all are welcomed at other times throughout the year, even bus loads with two weeks notice. As you drive along the Marden Road (from either direction) you will know you have arrived at the office because there will

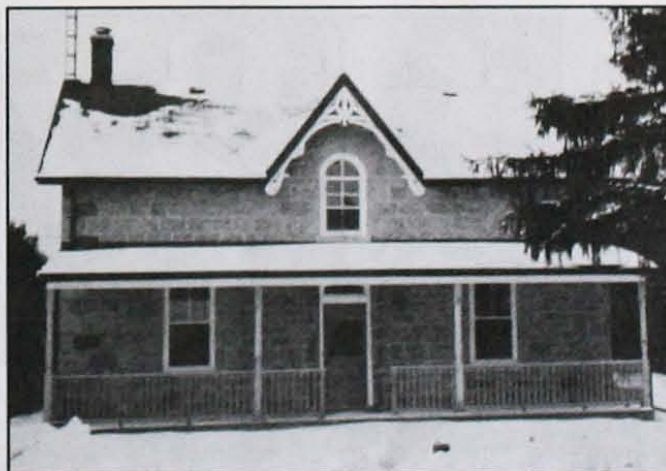
be a beautifully painted mail box and sign to guide you.

Just drive right in our winding country lane and park at the back of the house. There is a wheel chair accessible entrance. Our kitchen is equipped with a frig and stove, so a cup of tea is a possibility. We must remember though that this is a business office, not a social club.

As you may have heard, we are having a Shower at the March FWIO Board Meeting. This will give our Board Directors a chance to see the office, but also to bring some of the small items you need to set up an office, a kitchen and a bathroom. If you would like to help with this "collection" please contact your Board Director.

Referring to the Women's Institute, one of our 85 year old members said: "We have gained such strength through its great work." Let us continue to show our great strength, our great work, and our great support for our provincial office.

Glenna Smith is the Chair of the Furniture and Moving Committee for the FWIO.



A recent view of the FWIO office on Marden Road.