

# FWIO 1993 Annual Meeting

The Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario (FWIO) met for their annual meeting from November 23-26, 1993, in Guelph.

After the presentation of the flag and singing of O'Canada, there was a moment of silence for four recently deceased prominent WI members in recognition of their leadership, dedication and guidance: Anna P. (Lewis) Ewen, Director of the Women's Institute Branch and Home Economics Service, 1945-55; and former provincial Presidents, Pearl Holmes, 1942-44, Mary Trivers, 1963-65, and Florence (Diamond) Bean, 1978-80.

Some of the highlights from the three-day agenda included the following:

## Deputy Minister of Agriculture

Lunch guest Rita Burak, Deputy Minister of Agriculture, spoke to the group about how the Women's Institute and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food "have an awful lot in common." Changes in the economy and society and the agricultural food industry, she explained, have forced us both to re-examine our roles in the rural community. As organizations, she continued, we have developed strategic plans to help us realize our goals. "We have pulled people together, asked them to talk amongst themselves, and to discuss what needs to be done to achieve our vision." The Deputy Minister concluded by stating that she sympathized with both organizations for the growing pains they would experience in the future.

## New Branch Co-ordinator

In 1993, three new Branches were formed: North Shore, Trent Valley Area; Westside, Kingston Area; and, Oswego Friendship, Hamilton Area. The provincial New Branch Co-ordinator, Hilde Morden, reported that ten New Branch Organizers met at Crieff from November 2-4, 1993. The focus of the workshop was on "Marketing Our Organization."

Their discussions concluded that the following actions would be most effective in marketing: extending personal invitations



Pictured above is the FWIO Executive. Standing from left to right are Margaret Atkins - Public Relations Officer, Lorna McGrath - Western Regional Vice-President, Anna Jackson - Executive Secretary, Glenna Smith - Program Co-ordinator, and Doreen McMillan - Northern Regional Vice-President. Seated in the front row are Marg Harris - President Elect (left), Donna Russett - President (centre), and Marg Eberle - Past President (right).

to meetings; maintaining flexibility for meeting times, locations and programs; selling the Women's Institute organization through its newsletter, *Home & Country*; and, inviting New Branch Organizers to speak at events to further promote the WI.

## Centennial History Book

The Centennial Book Committee reported that more than 1700 books have been preordered. Dr. Linda Ambrose, Researcher/Writer, was excited about the more than 520 responses to the Branch surveys. She has been working on the proposed appendix to the book, which will list all the Branches which have ever existed in Ontario. She hopes to fill in the gaps in this appendix by working with the District Tweedsmuir Curators.

On October 16, 1993, Dr. Ambrose presented a paper on the WI to the Ontario Women's History Network at their conference "Women Overcoming Obstacles," held in Guelph as part of the Women's History Month Celebrations.

## Public Relations Report

From the Area reports, the PRO for the FWIO, Margaret Atkins, summarized that WI members volunteered nearly 750,000

hours to various causes. Each member volunteered an average of 46.3 hours.

In her report she encouraged everyone to publicize the WI in the following ways: promote by word of mouth; place signs at village entrances; create a video; wear your badges; carry your blue bag; conduct current and educational meetings; and, stand up and be counted as a WI member.

## Development Officer

Wally Knapp was pleased to report that 14,513 members were listed in the data bank, and only 57 Branches have not yet reported. It is the first time ever that a list of Ontario WI members has been established. He also reported that, on average, 100 questionnaires a day were being returned to the office. About 25 per cent of them have cheques enclosed, and the headquarters fund is growing daily. Wally has begun to make contacts and appointments with the corporate sector.

## Sincere Thanks

The FWIO Executive extends a heartfelt thanks to all those who purchased Christmas ornaments. A total of 2700 ornaments were sold and, after expenses, a donation of \$3400 was added to the Headquarters Fund.