

# A View from Here

By Margaret Eberle

Four years ago the "view from here" was certainly different than it is today. At the time, the farthest thing from my mind was the idea of me as the President of the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario (FWIO). But things change, and the things you least imagine come to pass.

The challenges and opportunities in the past three years have been exciting. One of the most exciting the FWIO has faced has been the changing partnership between the WI and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food (OMAF).

From the beginning, the Department of Agriculture was involved with the WI. Over the years a very strong partnership developed. And like all partnerships as they grow - they change. Among other things, OMAF has always provided office space and services for the FWIO.

The FWIO office was originally located in the Ministry's office complex at 801 Bay St. in Toronto. A change in the Ministry's direction and policy moved the FWIO office to a location north of Guelph; and then to its present location in the industrial area at 52 Royal Road. And, once again, the Ministry will move when the new building is completed on Stone Road in Guelph.

In the past few years, however, the FWIO office has received letters from Branches suggesting the FWIO find a place of their own. A few Branches went as far as sending in donations and designating them for



a Headquarters Fund. Consequently, a Space Task Force was appointed in August 1991, and as a result the Park House was found.

The Park House is a stone home with seven rooms belonging to Guelph Township. The house has plenty of room for offices, storage, committee rooms and parking. The Township is eager to have a non-profit organization as a long-term tenant.

At the August 1992 Board Meeting, it was decided that we should pursue a long-term lease with Guelph Township for the

Park House to be used as the FWIO Headquarters.

This change will offer a big challenge to all of us. Presently, the only source of income available to pay all the expenses incurred in running our organization of 18,000 members is the membership fees, and these fluctuate yearly. But we want to keep our fees as reasonable as possible. To do this the FWIO Executive and Board set a goal of one million dollars for a Headquarters Fund to be raised from other sources. After consulting with professional fund raisers, it was decided that a one million dollar fund is realistic. The interest from this fund will be used to cover the operating costs of the FWIO.

Establishing and maintaining a headquarters is probably the biggest change, the biggest project, the biggest challenge and the biggest opportunity that the Women's Institute has had to face in its 95 years of existence.

I'm sure that most members will agree that the following insight from a recent edition of the *Reader's Digest* also applies to our prospective new headquarters: "Every project, it has been said, goes through three phases: It will not work, it cost too much, and I thought it was a good idea all the time."

*Margaret Eberle is the President of the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario.*



## From the Provincial Program Co-ordinator

By Glenna Smith

The public is being asked to help the Recycling Council of Ontario locate products and packages with inaccurate environmental labelling. There are three aims: to reduce the problem of blue box contamination; to clear up public confusion caused by the misuse of recycling symbols and claims of recyclability and recycled content; and, to

ensure corporations have accurate information concerning environmental labelling. For more information contact Jill McWhinnie at (416)960-0938.

Do you live near the Great Lakes? Are you concerned about your health and the effects of exposure to environmental contaminants from the Great Lakes? The Great Lakes Health Effects Program is a five year federal initiative funded by the Ministry of Health and Welfare. Find out what this program has to offer. Write to Great Lakes Health Effects Program, Health and Welfare Canada, Environmental Health Centre, Room 136, Tunney's Pasture, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0L2.

Have you asked your Member of Parliament for a summary of Government Bills that have been passed in the last year? What do you know about global warming? Are you concerned about what is happening at our food banks, with our welfare system, and with employment equity?

We can no longer afford to be the "Silent Majority." Know your facts, discuss them at a meeting, then, speak up and demand action. The Women's Institute can make a difference!

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