
FWIO President's Perspectives

By Margaret Eberle

As I return home from my trips to the FWIO office in Guelph, there is a certain stoplight between Guelph and Highway 401 that I have to stop at every time. Directly in front of me at this stoplight is a cycle shop, and hanging in the window is a shiny new bicycle wheel. The vision of this wheel often remains in my mind as I continue on my journey.

In many ways, the Women's Institute is like this shiny wheel. Each spoke could represent a Branch. Just as the strength of the wheel depends on the spokes, the strength of the Women's Institute organization depends on the strength of its Branches. The more spokes, the stronger the wheel. And if these spokes are allowed to rust or tarnish, they make the wheel weak. Likewise, it is up to each Women's Institute member to keep their Branch polished and rust-free.

A very clever engineer figured out that if the spokes did not go directly to the hub, they would make a much stronger, more durable wheel. This criss-crossing of spokes is similar to our Branches joining

together in Districts and Areas to strengthen our organization.

The spokes or Branches in this criss-cross pattern are joined to the hub of the wheel, which could represent the FWIO Executive. The Executive has the responsibility to decide where this wheel will go. The hub, however, has no strength on its own. The hub must rely on the spokes for guidance and strength; just as the FWIO Executive relies on the Branches, Districts and Areas for guidance and strength.

A wheel, however, will not work with only spokes and a hub. There must be something to hold it all together and make it run smoothly over bumps and up and down hills along the road. The rim and tire do this of course. In the Women's Institute, the rim and tire of the organization are the Board Directors. These members join hands several times each year to hold everything together, smooth the path and carry the organization along its roads.

A wheel can only do so much on its own. It must link up with other wheels and carry frames of other things to be effective. Similarly, the Women's In-

stitute hooks up with many other organizations and agencies to produce results for the betterment of ourselves and our communities.

The FWIO has been rolling continuously for almost 100 years. We have done many, many things and then rolled on to the next job without waiting for recognition or thanks. Unfortunately, this habit has caught up with us. Now, we must polish our spokes, and be sure that as part of our job we tell others what we are doing. And as we polish, we must realize that more spokes make a stronger wheel and more Branches make a stronger organization.

Today, as the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario progresses into a new partnership with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food, and as we continue down new and untried paths, it is up to each member in each Branch to keep this wheel polished and in good repair in the years to come.

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

WI Members Treated Like Royalty

By Peggy Knapp

The 62nd Royal Agricultural Winter Fair was both exciting and challenging for Women's Institute members as we were asked, for the first time, to be participants.

"Women's Day" at the Royal hosted by the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario was a great success as 240 women sat down for luncheon in Cafe Royale. Chaired by Board Director, Peggy Dadd, the day consisted of a challenging and thought-provoking address by Mavis Wilson, former Minister of Women's Issues for the Province of Ontario, who spoke on "Issues Facing Women in the '90s."

A fashion show featuring wool, "The Oldest New Fibre," drew many admiring comments from the audience as WI models, under the direction of Eva Martin, presented a wide assortment of wool-

len sweaters, skirts, slacks and dresses from The Casual Way.

An exciting evening at the Royal Horse Show began with a visit by Her Royal Highness, the Duchess of York, who arrived in her landau to the skirl of the pipes, and concluded with a win by Canada's Ian Miller on Big Ben during the International Equestrian Event.

In the Crafts Area, at the invitation of the Royal, the FWIO mounted a major exhibit of Canadian handicrafts. Co-ordinated by Doris Dunn and Corinne Croxall, the six-booth area changed scenes each day as craftswomen displayed, demonstrated and/or sold their handicrafts. That WI members sat down each day at the quilt frames and invited passers-by to add a few stitches greatly added to the charm and country hospitality of the area.

The FWIO Booth Committee under the chairmanship of Ruth Halpert, as-

sisted by Barbara Pinkney and Rosine Findley, promoted our organization adjoining the Craft Exhibit. Many members took their turns as volunteers.

Altogether, in spite of the work load for dedicated volunteers, the excitement of this kind of exposure at "Canada's Show Window on Agriculture" was a highlight of our year. My grateful thanks to all who convened this major event, and to all the willing volunteers who pitched in to make it a success.

Peggy Knapp was the 1991 FWIO Royal Agricultural Winter Fair Co-ordinator.

Special Thanks

I would like to express my thanks and appreciation for the flowers, cards and letters of sympathy I received from members on the death of my son.

Margaret R. Munro