

THROUGH THE Grapevine

BY FWIO PRESIDENT
MARGARET BYL



As I look out the windows at the vineyards that surround my home I can see the development of the buds and leaves as the grapevines wake up from their winter's slumber and I am reminded that "For everything, there is a season..." This is the season of development and growth and of caring and sharing. The District Annuals are well underway (a time of sharing); the April Board Meeting hosted the Past Presidents' Council for a "Think Tank" (a time of development) and discussions were held on increasing our membership (a time for growth).

The Wainfleet and Port WI held its first meeting on February 22nd in Wainfleet and the Women Empowered WI had their inaugural meeting in St. Catharines on April 14th.

Our heartfelt sympathies go out to our Sisters in WI who have families and friends displaced or worse in the devastating fires in Fort McMurray, Alberta. This is a time for caring. I would ask that our Members become *Women Involved* and to *consider* giving a donation either through their Branch, District or Area or as a personal donation that will be matched by the Canadian Government. No amount is too little. FWIO is happy to funnel donations sent to the Provincial Office on to where they are most needed. FWIO has been in contact with the Alberta WI (AWI) who are developing a plan on how best to serve the communities involved in the aftermath of this disaster.

I am pleased to announce that Fred Cooper and Wayne Bauer are the Erland Lee Award of Appreciation recipients for Ontario. This prestigious award is presented by the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada to men who most exemplify those qualities of Erland Lee which led to the founding of the WI. On behalf of FWIO, we would like to thank them for their support!

To celebrate WI's 119th Anniversary on February 19th, WI Members participated in the Teddy Bear & Quincy Book Project, which was a huge success and produced a lot of publicity for WI. On February 21st, The Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, and other prestigious guests were welcomed at our celebrations at the Erland Lee (Museum) Home. More on these events can be found within this issue.

The first phase of our new digitization project was completed on March 31st. Thank you to the *Women Involved*, Irene, Alyssa, Andrea and Christine for all of their hard work. We gratefully acknowledge the Government of Canada's support through the Documentary Heritage Communities Program of Library and Archives Canada.

At the Museum, we have been approved once again for a grant from the Canada Summer Student Program. Thank you to Alyssa Gomori, our Museum Curator and the wonderful *Women Involved* – the volunteers who keep the Museum alive.

A new provincial website is underway. To keep the lines of communication open to our membership, Andrea has created E-Blasts. Only 60% of the E-Blasts are opened by the recipients. Please read the E-Blasts and share the information with the Members of your Branch who may not have internet. Please "like us" on Facebook and consider using Twitter to promote your events as well. The *Women Involved* as volunteers on your Provincial Board and your AVD's are another means of communications. We appreciate them for the hours they work on behalf of FWIO. Don't forget the staff at the Provincial Office – always willing to go the extra mile to help you.

The FWIO Handbook Committee has been busy updating the current Handbook (2012 version). The updated version will be available on the website in the near future.

The WI Rose will be available once again in the Spring of 2017 from Sheridan Nurseries. The WI Rose is hardy to Zone 5. More details will be available in the fall.

The *Women Involved* from Eastern Area have accepted an invitation to host the FWIO Provincial Conference in Pembroke on June 21-23, 2017 in conjunction with the ACWW Canada Area Conference which will start the evening of the 23rd to the 25th. Details as they become available.

"If you want to go fast, travel alone...if you want to go far, travel together" – Author unknown, African proverb.

Together, as *WI Women Involved*, we can make a difference.

Yours for Home and Country,
Margaret Byl