

**Report on the Communication Seminars held at the International Inner Wheel
Convention, Christchurch N.Z. May 2006
Compiled by the IIW Editor, Sally Herbert**

The seminars were led by the Editor, Board Director Robyn White, Convention Committee Publicity officer Myra Brown and Board Director Suzanne Nielsen.

The seminars naturally gravitated towards communication within Inner Wheel with an opportunity for creating conversations between members.

Communication is all about the giving and receiving of information and much emphasis was given to the potential of the internet with the following suggestions:

1. The IIW web site could have a list of the countries in which there are IW Clubs with links to those countries with their own web site - NOT the other way round. For example whilst in new Zealand we could access the IIW site from the new Zealand Site but not vice versa.
2. The site could contain information regarding the International Project to enable members to pass the information on to the public. The site could be regularly updated to include the amount raised so far and the number of clubs who had donated.
3. It was suggested that further links be established to ensure an email link to each country. Since this would only be a link the email address would not be in evidence and could be changed when necessary.
4. The whole web site would require regularly updating and countries would be responsible for keeping information within a recent time frame. Out of date material would negate the image being depicted. (It was understood that the office was in the process of organising a dedicated web master.)
5. It was also suggested that the Board Minutes might be put on the site and that countries might circulate their Association or National minutes on their own sites. (Australia already does circulate their minutes mainly by email.)
6. Countries wishing to publicise their Margaret Golding recipients could do this on their web site.

7. It was suggested that emails are the best way for women worldwide to communicate. It didn't matter what time of day the email was composed or picked up. Inner Wheel should always be mentioned in the subject line to ensure that the recipient opens the communication.

8. It was felt that there was usually at least one person in a club who was computer literate. The younger members could take on the mission of educating the older members. However, care should be taken that no-one was excluded. The etiquette of emails was discussed. For example never use all capital letters or abbreviations. Slang or colloquial expressions should be avoided since these led to misunderstandings. It was important to put who you were and the club/district you represented to avoid confusion.

9. It was suggested that some email addresses could be published in the directory - one or two for each country. It was appreciated that to have more would be impractical and expensive.

10. Members felt that very often a report for the newspaper was more successful if it was sent by email with a digital picture. One club had managed to enrol the editor of a local newspaper into their membership - a lesson to all!

Newsletters:

1. Members asked for the social project to be mentioned in the newsletter to keep it in the mind of all members.

2. It was suggested that projects can be usefully copied from one country to another. With this in mind members asked that an email contact be given when the project was published which would facilitate contact.

3. Points from the seminars could be incorporated in the newsletter.

In brief the other points raised:

1. If an IW Club contacts you either by email or snail mail - please reply! Many present at the seminars had experienced total lack of response to their communication.

2. When travelling on holiday or with business please try to contact an Inner Wheel Club. It doesn't matter if you are not speaking each other's language perfectly.
3. With regard to the International social Project try working with other organisations to increase funds and awareness for Inner Wheel.
4. Use the project as a means to have more contact with Rotary.
5. Be a good listener. Be aware of body language and tone of voice. Remember to smile and be welcoming. Always try for a feedback and exchange of ideas.
6. Some members asked for ways to make District meetings more appealing to members. One representative suggested having something different after the business had been dealt with e.g. a speaker, a seminar, a competition or a discussion of projects.

In conclusion:

Those attending a Convention for the first time felt that the Seminars were the highlight of their time there.

They were able to exchange ideas with other delegates.

It was suggested that for future Conventions countries should seriously consider whether their proposals were really necessary.

With fewer proposals more time would be available during the day for group discussions.

So many people had attended the seminars even though they were held at highly inconvenient times.

It was felt that this was the way forward for IIW as seen by the delegates.