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The gracious lady image — all tea parties and pretty flowered hats — annoys Lois Gibson.

Lois is president of the Mississauga Hospital Auxiliary and she admits that a lot of people see her role mainly in social terms — poised as she pours another cup of tea, smiling as she serves it.

"But that image is so unfortunate," she says. "If only people knew how much work there is, how much time we spend and how tired we are at the end."

The auxiliary is probably the largest volunteer organization in Mississauga with 4,000 senior members, 650 actively involved, and 129 junior volunteers. Turquoise-smocked members work in many areas of the hospital, assisting the staff and also providing extra services that the staff would never have time to give, such as caring for patients' plants and flowers, small courtesies that make a hospital stay more comfortable. There is also the Nearly New Shop, on Lakeshore Road W., run by auxiliary members to raise money for special projects.

Lois' job is to coordinate everything, to chair general and executive meetings, to attend 22 area and various committee meetings, to organize. She estimates that she spends, on the average, two full days a week at the hospital and that's not counting all the arranging and phone calls that she makes at home.

"I've been keeping track, sort of writing a diary of what I'm doing so the next president will know what is expected of her." Not that Lois didn't feel prepared when she took over the presidency last February. "I knew what was involved, I just didn't expect it to be as involving as it is." She smiles wryly.

Her association with the auxiliary goes back seven years. The family was new in the Erindale Woodlands area and one of the first things Lois heard about was the auxiliary.

She was stuck at home with three small children then, two, three and five years old. "And I had to get out and do something different." So she joined and was given the job taking pictures of newborn babies, a half day every month.

Then the auxiliary president asked her to become area convenor for Erindale Woodlands. She agreed and was later asked to become co-convenor of the gift shop with the idea of going on to become president.

"Way before that I had been talking to the president about her job and I said that it sounded like a great opportunity to learn so many things. I even said it was something I thought I'd like to do when the children are older," Lois recalls.

"I'm sure she grabbed on to it. You always have to have your eye on somebody and be planning ahead, planning who will take over when you are through."

Lois laughs. "I really can't complain that I was roped into my job. Besides I do enjoy it, I like organizing things."

Part of the organizing is fund-raising for hospital equipment and renovations. The auxiliary hopes to collect about \$50,000 this year, primarily to pay for two observation units on the pediatric floor to use for observing seriously ill children.

Plans include a lottery in the spring with a first prize of \$2,000, a second prize of \$1,000 and \$250 for the sellers of the winning tickets. The lottery draw will be held at the auxiliary's annual dance in May.

"One of the most rewarding things about this job," Lois says thoughtfully, "I may get awfully tired, planning and getting everything done, but there are a lot of other girls working right along with me, who often give just as much time and effort as I do. And some of them have seven or eight children.

"Actually it's easier for me now that my children are older and my husband is a great help although truthfully I think he'd prefer that I stay at home."

Lois's term of office is for two years. After that, as past president, she goes on the nominating committee for two years. And she plans to relax a bit, play golf a lot and get her house back in order.

More the gracious lady image than she is used to right now.



**The Mississauga Hospital Auxiliary is probably the largest volunteer organization in Mississauga with 4,000 senior members and 129 junior volunteers. Lois Gibson is auxiliary president, responsible for all auxiliary activities including, this year, a \$50,000 fund raising campaign to help pay for two observation units on the hospital's pediatric floor. Times photos by Ron Pozzer and Ray Saitz.**