

4H HOMEMAKING IN SEAFORTH WOMEN'S INSTITUTE



A Group of Seaforth 4H Leaders

L-r Mrs. Sarah Elliott, Mrs. Jean Keys, both WI members; Mrs. Olive Little, volunteer leader for 15 years; Mrs. Ricki Vansteelandt, volunteer leader and first recipient to receive Advanced Honours in Seaforth; Mrs. Grace Campbell, volunteer leader and second girl to receive Advanced Honours.

In April 1978 Seaforth Women's Institute celebrated its 50th anniversary. Mrs. Gordon Elliott, PRO tells about the activities and involvement with the 4H Homemaking Clubs, from the formation of the branch until the present time.

A year after the organizing of the Women's Institute, Seaforth Girls took part in a Household Science Judging Competition. In 1932 a Home Garden Club was taken and in 1933 a Domestic Science judging competition was conducted by Miss Helen McKercher and Miss Flora Durnin acting as coaches.

The Huron County Girls' Organization was formed in 1934 for the purpose of sponsoring an Achievement Day and the next year the executive of the Seaforth Junior Women's Institute organized a Girls' Garden and Canning Club with local leaders participating. Miss Durnin conducted a Leaders' Training School in Seaforth with an attendance of 21. Almost continuously since, Seaforth Women's Institute has sponsored Girls' Club work in their community.

From this beginning, interest grew and in 1952 when the name of 4H Homemaking was adopted the Girls' Club work program was well started. In the fall of 1971 Seaforth sponsored twelve 4H Homemaking Clubs with an enrollment of 135 members and in the Spring of 1972 there were thirteen clubs with an enrollment of 142 girls from the area. There were enough members for an Achievement Day for Seaforth clubs alone.

Many, many girls have received County Honours

for completing six clubs, approximately 125 girls have received Provincial Honours on the completion of twelve projects. In 1970 one girl Ricki (Williams) Vansteelandt received Advanced Honours for the completion of eighteen projects, with 11 more girls attaining that goal to date.

Other awards are offered by the Home Economics Branch of the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food for outstanding work. Each year girls are chosen from Huron County to be guests of the Ministry at the Western Fair, for a day. Some girls have attended the Girls' Conference at Guelph, while others have been rewarded with trips to Ottawa or Washington. Seaforth girls have won their share of these awards. Some of the members have appeared on television promoting 4H Homemaking Club work in the county. In 1953 a scholarship was set up by the women's Institutes of Huron County for 4H Homemaking Club girls. Seaforth has had 6 winners.

During Canada's Centennial year, the "4H girls" showed their appreciation to the Women's Institute by sponsoring a dance with the theme "Old Fashioned House Party." The strength of the 4H Homemaking program lies largely in the untiring efforts of the volunteer leaders. Where do we get these leaders needed to carry on the work? Women's Institute members handled the task in the beginning but with the growth of the program it was found necessary to try and interest people from the community to become leaders.

We have received excellent co-operation from club girls' mothers who see the "4H" program as a good experience and training for their girls; while others are