

# 80 years young at Solina WI

By M.J. Fraser

It's great to be 80 years old ... especially if you're in possession of all your limbs and faculties, and have managed to stay young!

And that's the way it is with Solina Women's Institute. The current membership isn't a day older than the small group of ladies (led by Mrs. Wm. Law, and by Mrs. Thos. Baker, their first president) who attended that first meeting, some four generations ago, in January of 1903.

A great deal has changed, of course. But on the other hand a great deal hasn't.

"For Home and Country" is still the motto, and the main focus of attention. Learning to live better, through greater efficiency and higher skills in homemaking, is still of prime importance to us. However — where once the accent was on pickling and preserving, quilting and soap-making and cheese-pressing — the W.I. extension courses now teach sewing with modern synthetics; cooking with microwave ovens; preserving produce by fast-freezing and quick-drying.

Concerns are no longer with the pasteurization of milk; with smallpox or diphtheria immunization for school

children. The Institute is concerned about pollution; about teenage drug and alcohol abuse, about providing clean water for people in Third World countries.

The goals of Solina W.I. (as outlined in the Mary Stewart Collect) haven't changed: "Let us be large in thought, in word, in deed ..." Where we once shipped bales of hand-knit socks and sweaters to fighting men overseas, and tons of home-grown produce to the depression-ravaged prairies, members now send money to provide education for underprivileged children in impoverished countries; boxes of Christmas gifts for under-privileged families in Canada.

The emphasis on education hasn't changed. Eighty years ago those first Solina W.I. members worked for broader education for their daughters; wider opportunities for all the children. They helped establish the Solina Community Library for them. Today members continue to sponsor 4H Homemaking clubs; to help provide scholarships for girls taking Home Economics training; to reward all young 4H members in the community for their achievements. And they continue to support the work of the Solina Community Library.

The Solina Women's Institute is still socially responsible for its community, as it has always been. It contributes to the support of Eldad Church; to the community hall, and the park beside it. It hosts a shower for each new bride and a presentation for each newly married young man in the community. It attends to the ill and the lonely as well as to such things as cancer drives. It provides the willing hand and practical help in time of deep sorrow, as well as in times of great rejoicing — such as in anniversaries and homecomings and successful soccer seasons. And 80th birthday parties!

So what has changed, then?

Just the faces. And the programs emphasized in a changing world. It is no longer strictly "rural" — members commute to urban centres to work as salespersons and bank tellers, teachers and nurses. The Institute is adapting itself to the needs.

The annual bazaar, with its long winter months of knitting and needlework, has long since given way to the popular Casserole Luncheon.

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## Foreign Greetings



*These two picturesque scenes are of Nijverdal, the home of ACWW president Ziny Westebing-Muller. The photographs were sent to FWIO by Mrs. Westebing-Muller with wishes for a merry Christmas and a happy New Year. The reverse of one of the photographs reads as follows:*

*May Christmas be a peaceful time*

*The New Year bring you much happiness*

*Our Conference in '83 a great success*

*Love in all your families from old and new friends*

*A world with friendship a friendship that never ends.*