

Seminar a success!

More than 60 women from rural and agricultural settings throughout Northern Ontario gathered in Sturgeon Falls March 20 and 21 for a seminar aimed at sharing common goals and interests.

The Veuve River Women's Institute which chartered in September 1983, sponsored the seminar. Janet Parsons, President, said she was very pleased with the large turnout, qualifying the event as a success. When asked why they organized the seminar, Mrs. Parsons said, "We wanted to learn about so many things that a seminar approach was the only feasible way."

Rural women from across Northern Ontario were invited to participate. "The Veuve River Women's Institute members offered to billet out-of-town participants to reduce accomodation costs," said Mrs. Parsons. Participants for the workshop came from as far away as Matheson.

Mary Ellen Levac, publicity chairman for the conference, said "The response from the urban community was impressive. Everyone seemed to know about this seminar. We actually made an impression in town."

Although four persons were on the organizing committee, Mrs. Levac explained, "all members of the Veuve River Women's Institute were responsible for making the seminar such a big success."

The agenda included a presentation by Terryl Ledoux, a colours and make-up consultant from North Bay. "Knowing what colours suit your skin tone results in a saving of money when purchasing clothes and designing your wardrobe," she said. "Also, knowing that you are wearing the right colours makes you feel good about yourself," she added.

Kristina Maus of Concerned Farm Women, spoke at length about a survey conducted among farming operations in Bruce and Grey Counties: the survey was the basis of a book called *The Farmer Takes a Wife*, written by Gisele Ireland, who was also on hand to chat with seminar participants and autograph copies of her book.

Ms. Maus said 67 per cent of farming operations in the survey area are owned jointly by the husband and wife, 19 per cent were owned solely by the man and two percent are own-

ed solely by the woman. The balance is made up of family owned corporations or other legal partnership arrangements.

On a sombre note, she said 86 per cent of the farming community surveyed is worse off in 1982 than in 1976, with product prices, input prices, interest rates, foreign land ownership and provincial and federal government agricultural priorities and policies as the main culprits.

Ms. Maus said the four major aspects of living on a farm which appeal to women are the country life independence, rural values, and the enjoyment derived from the production of food.

West Nipissing Planning and Industrial Board chairman John Beddows, a business teacher at Northern Secondary School in Sturgeon Falls, told seminar participants they are "Key personnel" in their farming business.

He explained certain advantages of forming official partnerships, limited partnerships or incorporating the farm business, when it comes to questions of ownership with the husband. "The best advice I can give is to write down what you feel you would want from your business organization," said Mr. Beddows. "And, see an accountant and a lawyer when preparing business partnership agreements and your will."

Ontario Farm Safety Association representative Marilyn Sewell told the women gathered for the seminar, "Being aware is your best protection."

She said an average of 40 to 50

people are killed in farming accidents annually in Ontario, and of those fatalities, up to 25 per cent involved youngsters under the age of 16.

Ms. Sewell said farm operators should at least be familiar with emergency procedures in order to be prepared in the event of an accident.

John Rowsell of New Liskeard College of Agriculture Technology explained that computers "can manipulate information very quickly."

Mr. Rowsell stressed the importance of taking a course in computers before purchasing, "to find out whether you are going to like using it."

He said a computer system for a medium-sized farm would cost about \$6,000 while one for a large farm would be \$9,000 dollars.

Dr. Jane Deschesne of Sturgeon Falls gave a lecture on women's health, followed by a presentation on assertiveness training by Canadore College West Nipissing co-ordinator Gaetan Serre.

Mr. Serre said one of the most rewarding features of assertiveness training is getting men and women to become more aware of their potential.

"It is very important when taking a personal inventory to take a look at all aspects of your life.

"Our Creator made us the way we were. We all have the potential to be successful in life," said Mr. Serre.

The seminar concluded with a tour of a local dairy farming operation — Delormdale Farm.



Signing their book *The Farmer Takes a Wife* are left, Gisele Ireland, author, and Kristina Maus, illustrator, for a participant in the Northern Ontario Rural Womens' Seminar, Linda Schaber of Cache Bay.