

Merely custodians of the land

Most Women's Institute members have been closely connected with farming and through this has come a love and respect of the land, a bonding with nature. There is a saying, "You can take the person off the farm, but you can't take the farm out of the person." We are merely custodians and we must protect it for future generations. Not merely in Canada, but throughout the world. Our water, land and air is being polluted and our forests disappearing. A few conservationists recognized this many years ago, but their protests fell on deaf ears. It was not a popular subject, nor was it taken seriously. For some things, recognition has come too late.

Public awareness is spreading slowly. In Ontario, WI members are on the move, playing their part in public education in the area of waste management. At the May '88 conference in Kingston, a commitment was made that Women's Institute members would initiate 100 projects in the area of waste management, with an emphasis on recycling.

I am often asked what we are doing. We are just now beginning to receive reports on your activities. Please don't forget to send yours. The following are a few items.

- * Many branches/districts/areas presented briefs to local municipalities.
- * Speaking to numerous interested groups.
- * Poster contests and presentations in schools.
- * Personally helping with collecting and sorting glass and paper.
- * Displays in malls during Agri-Food Week.
- * Display at Royal Agricultural Winter Fair (see Dec. Jan. Home & Country).
- * WI members invited to sit on local waste management committees.
- * Composting.

Your ideas have been many and varied. We will share them with you when all your reports have been received.

I recently read an article in a newspaper in which a senior citizen was commenting on the clean environment

Between the lines

Margaret Munro



he was raised in, and apologizing for polluting it for future generations. We will have to make the same apology or will we take the responsibility for turning the tide. Are you and your family not only preaching the four R's, but also practicing them. Conservation of our heritage is in your hands.

Last year there were recycling displays at all the area conventions showing many innovated ideas. I would like to congratulate all those people for their efforts. I hope you had a chance to take these displays to other functions and continue to do so.

Your involvement and efforts have shown how much pride you have in pre-

serving our heritage and confirms the fact that WI not only stands for Women's Institutes but also Women Involved.

The theme for April 1989 to April 1990 is Women in the Environment. The following are only some of the topics which could be used for programming.

- * hazardous waste
- * litter free community
- * composting
- * ongoing recycling
- * right to farm
- * residues in food products
- * natural resources — water, forest, land
- * land stewardship
- * multiculturalism — the people in our environment

The enthusiasm you have displayed, and are continuing to show, is the reason for our success. Keep up the good work.

Letter to the Editor

A thank you from long ago

Recently, while thinking back to the days of World War II, I recalled the gift of quilted bedcovers made and donated by members of the Women's Institute in Canada. Did anyone at that time think to write a personal thank you I wonder?

The war was nearly over when I first saw them in use at a maternity hospital in Buckinghamshire, where I did my midwifery training. In those days, when all hospital furnishings, as well as the paint work, were regulation white, they made quite an impact. Some were made of odd shaped pieces fitted together like crazy paving, some were in classical patchwork designs, others in the form of stylized flowers. On the reverse side would be the name of the Institute that had produced and donated it.

In the nursery, I was amazed to see colored blankets on the cots, another departure from the norm. These were in pink and blue, lovely and soft and bound with matching satin ribbon.

I hope this letter may serve as a big thank you, albeit very belated. There must be many, like myself, who when recalling those far-off days, remember the sense of warmth and comfort that came with those gifts. The knowledge that somewhere, someone cared.

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On volunteers . . .

New research on volunteering shows that helping others can produce the same kind of physical and mental glow long distance runners experience. A 1988 study of 1,700 volunteers in the U.S. show more than 70 per cent feel a "high" when volunteering. After helping others, most report feeling very happy and relaxed, as if they've just had a good physical workout.