

Conference 90 workshop reports

Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario hosted a conference in June at Carleton University. Thanks to the six contributors of the workshop reports on these two pages.

Turtle Teachings

By Gillian Catto

Sarah Smith is a member of the Turtle Clan of the Mohawk Tribe of the Iroquois Confederacy. She was, for seven years, a potter in the Smith family pottery on their reserve.

Sarah told us that native teaching is always done by the Dodah--the venerated older tribal members--on a one-to-one basis or in a circle where everyone is equal.

She spoke about the Thanksgiving rituals used before their dinner when the Dodah gives thanks to the Earth, Grasses and Trees, Winged Ones, Foods, Water, Thunder, Grandmother and the Moon, Eldest Brother and the Sun, the Four Winds, the Creator, and All Overlooked Things.

Sarah explained the symbolic Mohawk tree--a strong white pine with four large roots going to the north, south, east and west, under which lie buried the weapons of war. Atop the tree is an eagle with wings outspread ready to soar to freedom. Sarah talked about her years as a potter and her gradual realization of the spirituality of her work--the potter's wheel becoming the circle of life, centering the clay, from Mother Earth, on her wheel symbolizing the oneness of life with the earth.

The forest or the trees?

By Corinne Croxall

Forestry is one of the issues concerning our planet globally since it relates to water preservation, soil depletion and air purification. Canadian forestry programs are a response to profound changes forced upon us by world market conditions and the pressing need to bring our forest management practices into conformity with the global environment.

Dr. Darwin Burgess, who addressed Conference '90, is project leader of the research project of Soil Microbiology and Tree Nutrition at Petawawa National Forestry Institute. Today forestry is concerned with fast development of seedlings, techniques such as

dormant season cutting and interplanting of varieties to overcome dangers of intensive harvesting, and computer surveys to check insect infestation and disease.

Canadian scientists are involved in forestry programs in countries like Thailand where huge teak trees are endangered by poachers.

Never before have ecologists been involved in planning future development, only politicians and economists have determined forestry policy. But if people (WE) do not demand that all development in forestry be sustainable and accountable, then our time will be short on a planet which will be home to 10 billion people by 2010, and where rain forests will be gone in 30 years at present rates.

Learning to live as if nature matters

By Ruth Halbert

When talking to children today about their concerns, the ozone layer and the environment are mentioned first. Close your eyes and think about the environment. When you smell, do you get the scent of lily of the valley? Do you feel the sun on your face and the grass on your bare feet?

Canadians are a throw away society. We make more garbage each than citizens in any other country. We must remember garbage is a problem that

belongs to all of us and we must all do our part to help reduce it. Considerate people do not leave a mess!

Do you recognize the environmental symbol of three doves entwined in a maple leaf? Environmental products carry this symbol. Manufacturers must research their products to be sure they are environmentally safe before they use this symbol. Look for products packaged in recyclable or biodegradable containers. Leave excess packaging at the store by taking home your packages in a reusable bag.

The Great Lakes--water quality to mothers' milk

By Maisie Lasby

Capacity numbers of delegates listened as Dr. Jack Vallantyne told how he travels around the world telling youth of the importance of the environment. Dressed in a safari suit, complete with backpack and a globe, he appeared as Johnny Biosphere. He talked of how our habits change from

children to adults and how it affects our biosphere (Earth).

Much of his lecture was about conditions in the Great Lakes and our water supply. He talked about the white balls of phosphate that form in waste water and how they affect our water quality.

P.C.B.'s do not degrade. They are low in water but fish are accumulators.

Nursing mothers who are on a fish diet or are exposed to P.C.B.'s are giving their child a toxic cocktail.

In the next 20 years, agricultural practices will change due to the warming trend. We will be growing crops that are now produced 300 to 500 miles south.

Now we have to live with what we've created.