

from RAINBOW Country

~ By FWIO President, Elsie Stephenson



This fall the trees were dressed in gold and crimson making Ontario's countryside spectacular. Snow will fall covering the barren trees and ground.

Area Conventions provide an opportunity for Members to renew acquaintances and make new friends. I travelled to eleven Area Conventions this fall. Each Convention had a different theme. Northwestern Area's was "Back 2 Basics" and included a workshop on recycling sweaters into warm mitts. Guelph Area had a provincial police officer explain how to drive in a "roundabout". London Area's theme was "Laughter Is the Best Medicine" and featured jokes, laughing yoga and creative Halloween costumes. At Central Area's Convention there was a Victorian fashion show and a storyteller. Eastern Area's guest speaker was a retired Lieutenant Colonel in the Armed Forces. She was the first woman to command an air force squadron. Hamilton Area's theme was "Let's Celebrate Our Heritage" and included a display of clothing from the past century and some Members dressed in period costumes. Southwestern Area had a couple speak about Black History in the area. I would like to thank all of the WI Members who so graciously hosted me in their homes during the Area Conventions. Your thoughtfulness will always stay with me.

On October 4th, I attended the Premier's summit at Queen's Park and its' theme was "Ontario's Agri-Food Sector: Providing Healthy Foods to Support Healthy Eating". The summit included a special presentation to announce the winners of the Premier's Award for Agri-Food Innovation Excellence. The winner of the Premier's Award was P.R. Short and Son of the Niagara Region for building a recyclable clear plastic container with a lid that keeps fruit fresher longer and allows consumers to see what they are buying. The winner of the Minister of Agriculture's award was Burning Kiln Winery in Norfolk County which uses displaced tobacco kilns for drying grapes before fermentation. Leaders in Innovation award winners were Mariposa Dairy in Kawartha Lakes County for designing a press which quickly separates curds from whey, Nicholyn Farms from Simcoe County which provides nutritious

and tasty local food lunches, and Victory Organic in the Niagara Region which developed the Bob Wash which is an affordable small scale system for washing salad greens and root vegetables. Following the awards' presentation, there was a keynote address from a Loblaw executive and an executive from FoodShare Toronto. The afternoon session had two panels discussing healthy foods. A reception was held at the end of the day.

The Royal Agricultural Winter Fair celebrated its' 90th anniversary this year. On November 2nd, my husband and I were privileged to be invited to attend the opening reception followed by the Royal Horse Show.

Since 1996, FWIO has recognized the significant contribution made by a woman in agriculture at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair by presenting her with the prestigious Woman of Excellence in Agriculture Award. The winner of the award this year was Karen Eastman Velthuis. As a 4-H member, Karen showed calves at the Royal and for the past ten years has been a leader with the Carleton 4-H Association. She has chaperoned the 4-H members of the Carleton Classic team when they have shown cattle at the Royal. Congratulations Karen! For more, see page 15.

At the November Provincial Board Meeting, the Board Directors reviewed reports and addressed business from them. Financial statements were presented by the FWIO accountant. Also the Board began working on a new strategic plan.

Good-bye from Rainbow Country! Thank you to all the Members for their encouragement and support over the past year.

Elsie

