

International Connections



By Mary Janes

How Will Your Branch Celebrate ACWW Day?

Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW) Day is celebrated worldwide annually on April 29. In April, 1929 46 women from 24 countries attended the first International Conference of Rural Women in London, England. This conference was organized by the International Council of Women (ICW). At its 1930 Vienna Conference the ICW decided to form a Liaison Committee of rural women's organizations. In 1933 this Liaison Committee became the Associated Country Women of the World.

Here in Ontario Women's Institute (WI) Branches celebrate ACWW Day by holding candle lighting services, church services and potluck meals. They also invite special speakers or attend lectures by speakers such as Stephen Lewis, who speaks about the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Africa. Others read articles from *The Countrywoman*, discuss ACWW resolutions and recommendations (those to be debated in 2007 will soon be available from ACWW) or have a program around the United Nations theme for the year. (2007 is the International Polar Year. www.ipy-api.ca/english)

Branches also use and promote fair-trade products at their meetings. They feature ACWW countries by holding video evenings, dressing in ethnic costumes and tasting ethnic foods. Some Branches fundraise for Pennies for Friendship or ACWW projects. They hold plant auctions, pancake breakfasts, bazaars and "pound" auctions. Mary Ellen Closson explains that Members have fun by bringing wrapped items that weigh about a pound (beans, shortening, chocolate, etc.) to her Branch's annual meeting. One Member acts as auctioneer and auctions these items off to the highest bidder. The money goes to the "Pennies" scheme. ACWW projects are highlighted during the auction.

Other Branches have skits about Madge Watt (first ACWW President) play ACWW Trivial Pursuit or Jeopardy or similar games and contests.

How will your Branch celebrate ACWW Day, 2007?

Contact Mary Janes at mapa2ja@xcelco.on.ca or 519-786-5511

Did You Know?

Since October 2003 the interest from the FWIO International Scholarship is sent to the Lady Aberdeen Scholarship Fund. The International Scholarship was first presented by FWIO in 1962, to enable a student from a developing country to study or train in Ontario in a field related to the wellbeing of families, then return to her country of origin to further the interests of women. Now the money is used by the Lady Aberdeen Fund to enable ACWW Members to study in their own or other countries, in economic, social and cultural spheres. In 2004 there were 3 Lady Aberdeen recipients. The two recipients from Samoa attended a development course in Fiji; the one from Trinidad & Tobago attended a 2-year Early Childhood Care course.

