

SELF-PROFILE



Firmly Planted in WI

By Arthena Hecker



I live on St. Joseph's Island, an island in the shipping channel where the ships go through the Sault locks and on up to the Lakehead. Our population more than doubles during the summer months and in the fall of the year there are colour tours of the Island. Some years the colours are more spectacular than others. Last fall was exceptional.

There is an old maple tree along the roadway to my home - it's probably as old as the Institute - and its colours were glorious. There were all shades of red, orange and yellow and right in the middle of the tree was an area of green. The green offset the brilliant colours making the green appear greener. It was truly a magnificent sight.

I thought that old maple tree was like the Women's Institute. The vibrant coloured leaves represented the many changes that our organization has experienced in the past 100 years, and those that are likely to happen in the near future. The green leaves represented the core, that part of the organization that will not change, that refuses to change. Roughened by the weather and time, the trunk symbolizes the members, and the roots, which hold the tree so securely to the ground, are those who have gone before us.

How like those leaves many of us are. We refuse to change, or we kick and scream and raise an awful fuss. Change is sometimes hard to take, especially when it affects something with which we are so familiar.

Things are happening in our Women's Institute; change is in the wind. Nothing can happen, however, unless the Board of Directors vote on it. It is the Board of Directors who decide the course our Institute will take. Be

assured that I will support the decisions made by the Board. Also be assured that when I have to make decisions, they will be thought through with great care.

For the past seven or eight years I have worked at the local hardware store, seven miles from the nearest small town. Really, it is in the middle of nowhere. People drive 36 miles from Sault Ste. Marie to shop there. Why? The answer is service. This includes listening and bending over backwards to accommodate the customer. Often, customers do not say exactly what they mean. Working at this store has taught me to be more diplomatic, to have a great deal of patience and to really listen to people.

These skills and my secretarial experience in labour and employee relations, my work teaching 4-H and religious education and my years of volunteering have helped me to grow into the person I am. These are the life experiences that I brought to the organization as Board Director, as Northern Regional Vice-President and, now, as your President Elect.

I believe that the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario has a great deal to offer members, their families and their communities. And I will do everything possible to keep us strong and as firmly planted as that old maple tree.

Arthena Hecker is the President Elect of the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario. You can also read more about her on page 12 of the Summer '95 issue of Home & Country.



Tri-Area Visions North Convention a Great Success!

Have you considered a Bi- or Tri-Area Convention? At Visions North last fall, the Northern, North Central and Cochrane-Temiskaming Areas successfully completed their second Tri-Area Convention in the last five years. Corporate sponsorship, government grants and business support is more readily available when the participant numbers are increased. Innovative and educational programming stimulated WI members to realize their motto of "personal growth and community action." If you have any questions about how to organize this kind of convention, ask "Mary from Massey." Mary Caldwell can be reached at 86 Pleasant Valley Rd., RR 2, Massey ON P0P 1P0, (705)865-3076.

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