

The First Customer

By Helen Young

Being adventuresome people, it seemed as though we were perfect candidates to be the "first customers" to participate in the newly-organized Women's Institute Hospitality Homes in Nova Scotia.

Previously, we had stayed in four different WI Hospitality Homes in Ontario, with our visitors from the Women's Institutes in Zimbabwe. We were treated like royalty, and thoroughly enjoyed meeting more of our WI sisters. So, when we decided that our 1995 summer vacation would bring us to Nova Scotia, we were thrilled to learn that the same opportunity might await us.

Our proposed trip was to take three weeks - along Lake Erie and Lake Ontario, the whole length of the St. Lawrence River, around the Gaspé, along the eastern shore of New Brunswick to Amherst, Nova Scotia, then along the Fundy coast of Nova Scotia to Yarmouth. We planned it all in advance, and booked our overnight accommodation from home.

After receiving the list of WI homes available in Nova Scotia from the new Coordinator, Barbara Hinckley, we decided to write to four ladies in the areas we planned to visit. We included a self-addressed stamped envelope for their replies. We asked if they could enclose a map to their home and suggested that if they could not accommodate us, perhaps another member from their Branch could answer our request.

You can't imagine how excited I was when I opened our mail box one day to find three out of four replies. A few days later, the fourth lady telephoned our home. We were all excited about the prospect of meeting one another in a few weeks' time.

July 27, 1995

We arrived at Hardwoodlands in Hants County, north of Halifax. After a day of sight-seeing and hiking, we went to meet our first hostess, Ethel Fraser, who lived at the end of Fraser Road. Her home was full of guests from New Brunswick and Ontario, as well as some members of her own WI Branch. It was obvious why Ethel's beds were full, but it wasn't long before another WI member, Ruth Witt, arrived. After much lively conversation, we followed Ruth home in the dark to the end of another country road, where we stayed for the night.

July 28, 1995

We headed north, back to the Fundy coast. En route we visited a shipbuilder's home and an historical museum. And we stopped to

buy some giant pumpkin seeds from Howard Dill in Windsor. After a brief tour of the Grand Pre Church with the statue of Evangeline in front, we pulled up in front of Jean Palmeteer's home on Long Island Road. Jean arranged a visit to her son's dairy farm and planned a tour of several local points of interest. And, of course, more conversation ensued on into the evening and after breakfast the next morning.

July 29, 1995

After an afternoon of touring, we arrived at the Old School Museum in Tupperville, where we met our next hostess, Marion Inglis. Here, we also encountered a house-full of company, but Marion had reserved both a bedroom and a place at the table. The next morning we toured her fruit farm, which Marion and her sons operate. The facilities in use were similar to those in our home area of Norfolk County, Ontario.

July 30, 1995

Our agenda included several historic and natural sites of interest in and around Annapolis Royal. We stayed at a bed and breakfast home and enjoyed another seafood dinner.

July 31, 1995

A whale-watching cruise and snippets of life in several Acadian fishing villages filled our day. It was time to continue on our way to Yarmouth to meet our next hostess, Barbara Hinckley. Barbara and her husband Bruce drove us around to many sites that evening.

August 1, 1995

This was the day we planned to visit a couple of local museums and the Western Nova Scotia Exhibition in Yarmouth. However, en route from one museum, we stopped at an Instant Teller machine. This was the spot where our plans changed drastically! Only a few steps out of the car, I turned my ankle on an uneven sidewalk. Hearing it crack, I went down. Many passersby came to my rescue and it wasn't long before I was in the Emergency Room at the Yarmouth Hospital. After x-rays of both my head and my left leg, the surgeon was soon putting a cast on my broken ankle. My husband did eventually get to see the oxen pull and the heavy horse teams and the WI booth at the Exhibition.

In the meantime, Barbara had prepared a lovely dinner for us, which was definitely not part of the package. She even made me a comfortable bed on the chesterfield and in-



Barbara Hinckley (left) is the originator and organizer of the Hospitality Homes in Nova Scotia; Helen Young (right) is the first WI member from Ontario to participate.

visited a WI friend, Marilyn Burns, to keep me company while the others returned to the Exhibition. We declined her offer to stay another day and we started on our way the next morning.

Perhaps you've never thought of staying in WI Hospitality Homes. But after reading my story, don't you think it would be a great way to meet WI members in other areas? Remember, a new friend is just a stranger you haven't met yet!

So, whether you travel through Nova Scotia or Ontario, give Hospitality Homes a try! Or if you can't travel, maybe you would submit your name as a hostess. Who knows when a new friend may knock on your door?

Submitted by Helen Young, Lynnville WI, Norfolk North District. The Hospitality Homes Coordinator for Nova Scotia is Barbara Hinckley, RR 4, Box 5107, Yarmouth NS B5A 4A8, Phone: (902)742-4188.

Hospitality Homes in Ontario

Are you planning a vacation? Remember, Hospitality Homes in Ontario are open to Women's Institute members and their travelling companions for \$10 per night per person. To obtain a list of the homes, send three 45 cent stamps to Gillian Catto, the Hospitality Homes Coordinator, at Box 16, RR 1, Whitefish ON P0M 3E0. For more information call her at (705)866-0253.