



HOME & COUNTRY

HOME & COUNTRY is published quarterly by the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario (FWIO). It has two objectives:

1. To provide educational material which cultivates more knowledgeable and responsible citizens and promotes good family life skills, leadership development and community action.
2. To provide a "communications link" among all members of the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario and other related organizations.

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Letters to the Editor:

Home Away from Home

By Marjorie Sharpe



I was born and lived my first 40 years in a small town called Tamworth in the County of Staffordshire in England. This area of England is known for both the mining of coal and the clay used in the famous Staffordshire Potteries.

In October, 1980, together with my tool-maker husband and two children, Stephen (20) and Jayne (17), I arrived in London, Ontario. Two years later, at the height of the recession, the company my husband worked for closed all its Canadian operations and he was laid off.

That same year, we had to re-mortgage the house; mortgage rates had just peaked at 22 per cent. It was impossible to buy a job in the London area, or to sell the house for that matter, so we decided to rent our home and find cheaper accommodation.

We took a job on a dairy farm in Thorndale, Ontario, and a beautiful little house came with the job. It was here that I was first introduced to the Women's Institute. Although it was very strong in the rural areas of England, between going to work and bringing up two children I never had the opportunity to get involved. The farm family in Thorndale was named Woods and the lady of the house was named Marian. She had become a good friend to us all.

Marian was also a loyal and very active member of the Crumlin Women's Institute, and before long she was taking me along to meetings and introducing me to other members. I felt at ease with these women; they always made me feel welcome. I am indebted to both Marion and the Crumlin WI for the support our family received during this very unsettled and emotional time in our lives.

Through the WI, I was taught new cooking skills and other techniques that were quite different from those used in England. Even minor things, like the kind of flour used in Canada is quite different than what I had always used. And to put raw vegetables on the table or peas or carrots in jello was unheard of in my country.

Soon, I was getting recruited to help with the catering at weddings, farm events and other community functions. I enjoyed these times, as well as the regular meetings and the day trips we took to interesting places.

After almost two years, and with the recession lifting, my husband went back into engineering and we moved back to our own home in London. Our taste of rural life, however, made us restless and a couple of years later we moved to Lobo Township.

It was while my husband, who is a member of a Barber Shop Chorus, was performing in a concert that I was introduced to Rie Van Steeg, the wife of one of his fellow members. She was and still is a member of the South Lobo WI and was not long asking me to join.

This I did, and can only say that I could not have met a nicer or more friendly group of ladies. They always make me feel very welcome and important to their group. I am certainly enjoying my time with them and look forward to each meeting. The Women's Institute has certainly filled a void in my life and I would encourage anyone, young or old, to get involved with their local Branch.

Marjorie Sharpe is a member of the South Lobo Women's Institute in Middlesex North District.

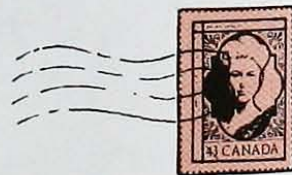
August 21, 1994

Dear Friends:

I'm impressed with the simplicity of decor and the efficiency of the equipment in our Women's Institute Headquarters. BRAVO! I intended to make my donation at years' end, but can't wait - please find enclosed a cheque for \$100.

Sincerely,
Marion Mainprize
St. Mary's, Ontario

P.S. - [The Grand Opening] was a GRAND Occasion!



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