

FWIC CONVENTION REPORTS FROM TRURO

Women's Institute members and day visitors from across Canada gathered at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College in Truro, from June 2 to 6, to participate in the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada (FWIC) Thirteenth Triennial Convention. The convention theme was "Today's Families, Tomorrow's Future."

Many thanks to those members from Ontario who attended and provided the following reports and highlights:

Thursday, June 2, 1994



The swirl of bagpipes caused hearts to fill as the FWIC Executive were piped into the Athletic Centre during the parade of the flags. FWIO Past President, Margaret Eberle, carried Ontario's provincial flag followed by President Donna Russett and President Elect Marg Harris.

Jacquie Linde, FWIC President, gave the welcome and chaired the official opening. As well as greetings from The Queen and the Prime Minister of Canada, best wishes were extended from a number of local and provincial dignitaries. Valerie Fisher, President of the Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW), brought greetings from the 'International Family of the World.'

Barbara Crosbie, Vice-Chair of the Canada Committee on the International Year of the Family and a member of the Provincial Interdisciplinary Committee of the Family in Newfoundland, delivered the theme address - "Today's Families, Tomorrow's Future."



ACWW President, Valerie Fisher (second from right), and ACWW Area President for Canada, Peggy Knapp (right), greet and talk with Women's Institute members throughout the four-day convention.

She stated that families are the heart of a community; they are the engine that drive the nation. And, while Canadians value the family unit and Canada is the best country in the world in which to live, some of our children have no home to sleep in, and they go to sleep hungry.

There are many problems facing us today, she continued. And with a bit of grit and a lot of determination, we will get through. If we are not part of the solution, we are part of the problem. She questioned whether the most important function of family was having someone wonder where you are if you are not home on time.

Crosbie described a day in the life of an average family. She asked: "Who is responsible for the family - for children, adolescents, single mothers and their children, the elderly, those with disabilities or illnesses?" The answer, of course, we are all responsible.

She closed by saying that the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada is a role model for the 21st century and a driving force behind many important improvements in the national and international sphere, not the least of which is the International Year of the Family.

By Marg Harris,
President Elect, FWIO

The Meaning of Family

The family is a storehouse in which the finest treasures are kept. The pleasures, sorrows, hopes and dreams of the world are family.

Shirley Pelton, Falkland WI, Brant South

Friday, June 3, 1994

Friday morning, Charlotte Johnson, FWIC President Elect, presented the changes in the constitution and by-laws and the policy and administrative guidelines.

A Family Business Management Consultant, David Irvine from Alberta, followed with a talk about "Farm Family Renewal: Your Child's Self-Esteem."

"I was raised on a small farm in Central Alberta," he said. "When reflecting about people who know about helping, I think of our neighbour and gardener,

Jack. His style is derived from the whole farming approach, which itself is derived from a long life of observing plants and the way they respond to different kinds of treatment. I made a list of some of the things he taught me about farming and looking at the list, I realized that it would be an excellent list to give someone who wanted to learn some things about raising kids."

Irvine went on to describe some of the things Jack taught him:

☞ *Don't use poor quality seed.*

Seeds are like values - make sure your values are of the best quality and do whatever you can to discover and nurture them before you invest a lot of energy cultivating them in your children.

☞ *A secret of successful gardening is having prepared the soil.*

It is the environment you have created in your home that makes the difference as to whether your children will thrive.

☞ *The plants that hold firmest are the ones that develop their own roots.*

We must resist overprotecting our children and let them develop their own independence.

☞ *Excessive watering produces weakness, not strength.*

Children, like plants, thrive on a certain amount of struggle to earn their own "stuff." It is through this struggle that they learn responsibility.

☞ *In spite of your best efforts, sometimes some plants will not turn out as you expect.*

We can instill our values, create a nurturing environment and establish firm and fair boundaries, but ultimately how children "turn out" has a lot to do with their individuality and uniqueness.