

Suchdava says the WI does so much with so little!

By Janine Roelens-Grant

Swadish Suchdava was born and raised in Alwar in the Province of Rajasthan in northern India. After she married, Swadish lived in Nairobi in Kenya for thirteen years. "But it was no place to raise children after [the country gained] independence," Swadish explained. So after her husband, Om, attended a Lion's Club Convention in Chicago in 1967, followed by a trip to Expo in Montreal, they decided to emigrate to Canada.

They settled in Toronto in the summer of 1968 with their three children; Om had accepted a position at a law firm. Two summers later, Om's work took them to Beamsville - where they still live.

Swadish was introduced to the Women's Institute in a small place called Eldoret in Kenya. Because her husband was a resident magistrate, she was automatically made an honorary member of the WI.

Her first introduction to the Women's Institute in Ontario was in 1971. She attended a meeting of the Beamsville WI to hear a guest speaker talk about their experiences in Nyeri, Kenya. Swadish has been a member of the Beamsville Branch since that time.

"I joined because I thought I could learn more on a variety of topics. I thought going to the Women's Institute meetings and tak-

ing their courses would help me adjust to life here." And it has she explained: "I have adjusted to life in this country; I have learned a new way of cooking, and I have gained new friends."

As Convenor of Citizenship and World Affairs, Swadish was sent by her Branch to an Officer's Conference in 1972. Swadish has held most convenorships at the Branch level, and has served as President and Vice-President. Presently, she is the Area Vice-President and will be Area President in the fall.

Swadish says she has taken most of the courses offered through the Women's Institute. Her interest in knitting, sewing and needlepoint have all stemmed from WI courses. She believes that at one time, when courses were offered to the general public, they were a 'big drawing card,' and people were more attuned with what the Women's Institute was all about.

This past summer, the Beamsville Branch organized a fashion show and served a luncheon as part of the local Strawberry Festival. Their major fund raisers, however, include a fall luncheon in October and a Valentine's luncheon in February.

Swadish has been an active member of her community beyond her WI involve-



Swadish Suchdava

ment. She was a charter member and President of the Lioness Club in Beamsville. And she has participated as a Director and First Vice-President of Community Care, a program that distributes food, clothing and furniture to needy people in the area.

When asked about the strengths of the WI, Swadish commented: "The WI does so much with so little, and they still make a great impact on people in the community." The unfortunate thing, she added, is that the WI is not known for its work. She recalled the surprise of a recent interviewer when she told them the Women's Institute was responsible for the pasteurization of milk, the wrapping of bread and the white lines on highways. "The more people who are aware of what we do," she concluded, "the more we can help."

Women's Day at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair

On November 11, 1993, the Women's Institutes of Ontario will host "Women's Day" at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair (RAWF). "Women: The Strongest Link in the Food Chain" is this year's theme for the panel discussion at the luncheon in Cafe Royale. Come and listen to speakers - all women - talk about producing, processing, marketing and buying food.

Participate in a special Remembrance Day tribute to all those women who stayed home during the war years and worked, keeping their homes, families and communities together.

After lunch, look for demonstrations on the stages with a 'focus on food,' and take the opportunity to see the new Royal Cookbook. And don't forget about the

'pomp and pageantry' of the opening of the Royal Horse Show.

Tickets - at \$45 each - include admission to the Royal, luncheon at Cafe Royale, and entrance to the opening of the Horse Show. A limited number of tickets are available from Mrs. M. Dunn, RR#4, Stouffville, Ontario, L4A 7X5, (416)888-1280.