

Profile:

“Stand up, speak out, and be proud to be a Women’s Institute member!”

By Janine Roelens-Grant

“We must become more visible, we must take a stand!”



Glenna Smith has lived up to these proclamations since she first joined the Women’s Institute in 1965. A newcomer to the community of Arkell, she joined the WI to meet new people and become involved with the community.

Glenna reminds me that Adelaide Hoodless didn’t start the Women’s Institute or the YWCA by sitting back and saying “That’s not my problem” or “I shouldn’t become involved.”

“Likewise, every Women’s Institute member must become involved with the issues of today. We must become more concerned about ... the food situation, land use, and what is happening in education. Every community has issues and every Women’s Institute member needs to become aware of them and act on them. If new people in a community see this, see that you’re doing something worthwhile, they will become involved as well.”

Recently, Glenna was rewarded for her community involvement. In recognition of her outstanding volunteer contribution, organizational ability, enthusiasm, extreme competence and overall dependability, she was presented with a certificate by the County of Wellington.

Glenna says that she has gained a wealth of experience and knowledge, a great deal of confidence, and many friends as a member of the Women’s Institute.

In June of 1992, Glenna went to the ACWW Conference at The Hague. “What really struck me was the fact that all these

women [from all over the world] spoke English, and ... we have so much trouble in our country over language.” She came home and immediately started saving pennies to go to the next conference in New Zealand.

As Chair of the Education Committee for Halton and Wellington District, Glenna worked on *A Cookbook for Canada’s Kids: Traditional, Nutritional, Sensible, Centstable*. One thousand copies went to food banks; another thousand was distributed where there was a need. “We have to go further than this,” she says, “and provide cooking schools and educate people.”

Through the annual workshops she has helped organize, Glenna receives a great deal of satisfaction. “They are a lot of work, but so rewarding,” she explains. “Participants are so enthusiastic about what they learn.”

In her role as New Branch Organizer for the Guelph Area, she sees the Women’s Institute as a “tool to meet community concerns.” She acknowledges that “it’s difficult to get women to commit themselves.” But she adds: “We’ve got to help for home and country; we just can’t leave it up to somebody else. So if you know of a community need, develop a Women’s Institute Branch to back you.”

When I asked her to tell me about her position as Program Co-ordinator, Glenna responded: “Every time I go to see Anna, she gives me another box of material to go through. You get so much material at the provincial level in this position, but it’s

hard to get it out to the Branches. Today, people have access to OMAF offices, libraries and universities; they use local resources.”

One of her duties is to summarize and report on the 14 Areas at the annual meeting. She hopes to improve on the reporting procedures for all Program Co-ordinators. Glenna is also responsible for developing a theme around which Branches can plan their annual programs. This year’s theme - “Stand Up, Speak Out, and Be Proud to Be a Women’s Institute Member” - is tied in with getting new members and forming new Branches.

“You have so much to gain as an individual if you join the Women’s Institute. And there is so much to do to make your community a better place to live; and wouldn’t you like to be a part of it?”



Environmental Posters

All Women’s Institute members are invited to design an environmental poster. The FWIO President will collect one per Area at the Area Convention for judging at the provincial level.

Theme: An environmental message

Size: 11" x 17"

Colour: Black and white or colour

Who: Any Women’s Institute member

Why: To provide three posters per province for the FWIC Conference

When: For your Area Convention