
WI Volunteers at the Agricultural Museum

By Lynn Campbell

This year marks the seventh anniversary of the large, active Women's Institute volunteer program at the Ontario Agricultural Museum in Milton, Ontario. This year volunteers from Halton, Wellington, Wentworth, and as far away as Oxford County will help the Museum in a myriad of ways. From interpreting our Mount View Women's Institute Hall to helping with school programs and special events, Women's Institute members make an important contribution to the Museum.

The Women's Institute Hall officially opened in 1979, the first year of operation at the Museum. The Hall housed a small exhibit, including display panels and photographs on the history of the Women's Institute. New kitchen facilities were built at the rear of the Hall allowing visiting Branches to hold meetings. The Hall was very busy hosting groups from all over the province for the next few years.

In 1986, however, at a meeting of the Museum staff and the Women's Institute Hall Committee, it was decided to change the interpretation of the Hall. Instead of being an exhibit building, the Hall became part of the Museum's Cross-roads Community, featuring buildings restored to a specific time period between 1910 and 1928.

The Hall was structurally sound, but in order to "freeze" it in time, many changes had to be done to the interior. The interior decoration and artifacts associated with a

Women's Institute Community Hall in 1928 replaced the exhibits. The kind of furnishings used in community halls during this period was researched and then purchased for the Mount View Hall. The interpretation of the Hall now focused on the important role of the Women's Institutes in the community at this time.

In keeping with this theme, the Hall appears as if a Demonstration Lecture course in sewing had just finished for the day. Demonstration lectures were an important education program of the Women's Institute at this time. Inaugurated in 1911, these two-week lecture courses were held in many communities across the province for a minimal fee of 25 cents per person. Instructors, hired by the Department of Agriculture, taught courses in sewing, first aid, cooking or millinery. In 1928 alone over 5,000 rural Ontario women took these courses, a point stressed in the interpretation of the Hall.

In 1985 the Museum and the Women's Institute Hall Committee decided to experiment with a volunteer program to staff the Hall on special event weekends. In the first year 20 volunteers worked over 180 hours on special event weekends. The program was a decided success and continued to expand. Last year over 60 volunteers worked almost 700 hours!

Now volunteers not only staff the Hall, they work on special school programs, act as hostesses for special events, and offer our visitors a taste of



Pictured above are just four of the many WI volunteers at the Museum.

homemade baking at some special events, the proceeds of which go to local Institutes. As well, Women's Institute members have enthusiastically contributed to the Museum in other ways, such as participating in the "Country Quilt" show. Today, Women's Institute volunteers play a vital role in the program at the Ontario Agricultural Museum by helping us educate visitors about rural life, agriculture and the Women's Institute.

If you would like to become a Women's Institute volunteer at the Museum, please contact your FWIO Board Director by April 15, or Dorene Collins at the Museum (P.O. Box 38, Milton, Ontario, L9T 2Y3, (416)878-8151). Each volunteer is required to attend a one-day training period in the spring scheduled for May 5, 1992, and to commit to working at specific times. We hope you will join us this spring season.

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Le pouvoir d'une rose

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vous puissiez faire est de féliciter quelqu'un en public au moment où il s'y attend le moins. Au cours d'une réunion d'un groupe d'enseignants à la retraite où j'avais été invitée à titre de conférencier, des roses ont été données à quatre de leurs fidèles membres. Une rose était destinée à la dame qui envoie les cartes de rétablissement, d'anniversaire et de condoléances. Une rose a également été remise à la responsable du comité téléphonique, une autre à celle qui par-

ticipe à toutes les réunions, et enfin une dernière rose a été donnée à un membre qui semble toujours prêt à aider dans des situations difficiles. Il ne fait aucun doute que ces personnes font preuve de leadership dans leur organisation. Il y a encore bien d'autres façons de remercier les gens, par exemple, en décernant des certificats humoristiques, en donnant un collage-maison, une rosette crochétée ou des rubans fait de papier de bricolage. Ce sont là des moyens peu coûteux de faire un compliment.

Il existe de nombreuses façons, à la

fois simples et économiques, de motiver les membres de votre organisation et de les encourager à démontrer des qualités de chef. N'oubliez surtout pas que les compliments ont toujours leur place!

Cora Whittington est diplômée du Programme avancé de leadership agricole. Elle possède de l'expérience en travail social et elle présente des exposés sur l'amour-propre, sur la façon d'élever des enfants positifs, sur les communications ainsi que sur le leadership organisationnel et personnel. Elle et son mari possèdent une ferme bovine située dans le comté de Peterborough.