

Down The Garden Path

ROSE on the ROAD *Diary*

by Patty Pizziola, ROSE Program Manager

I was so excited when Fran Farrell (WI Member and Family Lifestyles Chair at IPM 2008) and I connected about the Women's Institute display at the International Plowing Match. It had been years since I had attended this event and I was excited about the chance to let rural women know that WI is still here for them. When the rain started on the weekend before the event, I thought I was prepared with my wind pants and umbrella but when it was still raining on Monday morning I knew I would need my rubber boots! I was ready to get the job done – until I arrived at the gates where I was told that cars were not allowed onto the site because of the wet ground. Without a parking pass or a volunteer ticket and no idea how and where I would meet WI Member Sylvia Hasbury who was waiting for me, I was beginning to wonder what I had gotten myself into. How am I going to get all this information into our booth tomorrow morning before the show starts? The idea of trudging through the field on opening day with boxes of

brochures, newsletters, plus the signage and displays was not ideal. As I start to drive away, I am enjoying the hustle and bustle of activity that comes with any large event! Tractors and SUV's with 4-wheel drive turn off to various entrances in the site while campers with trailers and trucks are making their way to the campground area. It's amazing to see so many people come together for a single event. I surprisingly meet up with Sylvia - she is "unofficially" directing traffic in her yellow raincoat and directs me down a makeshift road that my little car can handle. Together we load up her trusty little wagon with all the WI material and spend the rest of the day setting up our tables and display in anticipation of the thousands of people that will be through the gates the next day.

Luckily, the sun comes out the next day and the ground starts to dry up. The next few days are so much fun! I connect with many WI Members from across the province – some I have met

in my travels and some I am meeting for the first time. I see a lot of familiar faces - friends of my family, people I went to highschool with and even a distant relative I haven't seen in ages. Mrs. Lamont from South Saugeen WI and I walk up to watch the Square-Dancing Tractors – what a great show! This year, a total of 94,457 people walked through the gates of IPM over the five days and we were very lucky to be a part of it!

The District of Temiskaming will make history in 2009 when it hosts the first International Plowing Match and Rural Expo to be held in Northern Ontario. The Municipality of Earleton will play host to the largest event ever held in Northern Ontario from September 22nd to September 26th, 2009.

