

Southline Brant WI celebrating 75 years

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Special to WHT

Seventy-five years and still going strong!

Southline Brant Women's Institute members are busy planning activities for 2009, among them the group's 75th anniversary on May 2, and its fourth annual ROSE (Rural Ontario Sharing Education) program.

For 75 years, members of the Southline Brant Women's Institute have been working for home and country, supporting, caring for and educating one another to bring a better quality of life to families, friends and communities.

On May 10, 1934, the first executive of the Southline Brant Women's Institute was formed, including Mrs. James E. Metcalfe, president; Mrs. Hugh Traynor, first vice; Mrs. George Francis, treasurer; and Mrs. Elmer Lines, secretary. Other charter members were Miss Molly Pepper (Pinkney), Mrs. Sebastian Kirstine, Mrs. William Kirstine, Mrs. Henry Siegner, Mrs. Earl Siegner, Mrs. Charles Tanner, Miss Sadie Siegner, Mrs. Joseph Kirstine, Mrs. George Metcalfe, Mrs. Ed McKelvie, Mrs. Murray Crispin, Mrs. Charles Fischer, Mrs. Ed Dobson and Mrs. Ed Hopkins.

Currently, Southline Brant Women's Institute has 19 members: Leona Francis, Anna Oehring, Joan Hundt, Florence Birr, Eugenia Zettler, Mary Poechman, Phyllis Poechman, Joan Ernwein, Joan Stroeder, Joan Grubb, Gail Poechman, Phyllis Siegner, Brenda Meyer, Marlene Montag, Cathy VandeVyvere, Caryle Hickling, Ruth Pletsch, Darlene Waechter and Laura Hergott.

The first 11 members listed have received their Honorary Life Membership badges and certificates. The eldest of these members is Leona Francis, who is 96 years young, and has been a member for 66 years. She is presently



The Southline Brant Women's Institute celebrated its 40th anniversary in 1974 with a cake cutting that included, from the left, members Anna Oehring, Molly Pinkney, Mrs. George Francis, Viola Crispin and Wilha Siegner. Other members in attendance that day were Dorris Ostendorff, Elaine Francis and Leona Francis. The local Institute will mark a new milestone in 2009 - its 75th anniversary.

Submitted photo

being cared for at Hanover Care Centre. Another Honourary Life Member, Anna Oehring, has been a member for 51 years. She continues to make volunteering her life's passion.

In addition, Anna Oehring and Joan Grubb have been the proud recipients of the Bruce County District Women's Institute Fair Award.

The Women's Institute has a long tradition of education through sponsoring short courses for adults, 4-H courses for young people, and

through the researching and presenting of information at monthly meetings.

In 1999, the ROSE program was developed, providing an opportunity for Women's Institute members to reach out to their communities by providing volunteer partners who share their expertise through the branches. ROSE sessions provide access to vital health and social service information (education,

prevention and treatment) as well as relevant topics of interest to women, their families, friends and communities.

The ROSE program has experienced overwhelming success. To date, over 1,000 ROSE sessions have been held, as stated in the winter 2009 edition of "Home and Country".

Southline Brant Women's Institute has hosted three ROSE sessions: Drive Wise with Sgt. Robert Degroote, Chronic Pain Management with The Arthritis Society, and Health Care Alternatives with Kucan Chiropractic.

On Oct. 14, 2009, the Southline Brant chapter and the Alzheimer Society Grey-Bruce will present Brain Health: Different Conditions that Affect Brain Health.

History is rich along the southline, as recorded in 10 volumes compiled in the Tweedsmuir books. These volumes continue to be kept up by the curators of the branch. These volumes will be on display at the Southline Brant Women's Institute's open house on Saturday, May 2 at the Walkerton Public Library.

--With files from the Tweedsmuir History Books and from curators Mary Poechman and Eugenia Zettler

