

Happy 56th birthday to Saltfleet WI

The Saltfleet Women's Institute had plenty to celebrate last Wednesday evening at the Erland Lee Museum Home but they began their agenda of events with a big happy birthday wish to themselves.

Along with celebrating their 56th birthday, the group also joined together in commemorating the 10th anniversary of the Erland Lee Museum Home, the 85th birthday of the Women's Institute which was first formed in Stoney Creek in 1897, and the 100th anniversary of E.D. Smith.

Llewellyn S. Smith Jr., whose great-great-grandmother, Mrs. E. D. Smith, was first president of the Women's Institute, was guest speaker for the evening and Mayor Bill Sears was on hand to bring greetings from the town.

After the women got the business in the agenda out of the way they sat back and were entertained by stories from Mr. Smith, who spoke of his life in the E.D. Smith family business.

And a "family" business it is, stressed Mr. Smith.

"It's a family-run business and people ask me if that's good. I say and my family says that continuity is half the battle," said Mr. Smith.

And E. D. Smith certainly has had continuity. The Smith's Canadian heritage goes back to 1787 when Silas

Smith, E. D. Smith's great-grandfather, arrived from New Jersey in order to remain loyal to the Crown shortly after the American Revolution. He was given 200 acres just east of present day Winona. Throughout the years the company has passed from Smith to Smith, first being E. D. Smith who built an extensive fruit farm around his parents' homestead. His fruit-shipping venture began in 1882 and he quickly earned the nickname "the fruit king."

"Throughout the years we've tried to keep it a family environment, not a factory. We've tried to set an environment of trust," said Mr. Smith.

He also spoke of downfalls and blessings throughout the years concerning the business. He said how fortun-

ate it was that each generation was blessed with a son, each of whom decided to go into the family business.

"I grew up in the 60's and I think I was very lucky. It was a time of anti-establishment and I felt I had a real advantage over everyone else. I knew where I was going and that started at home. No one ever said, 'you have to work here' - I wanted to," said Mr. Smith.

He went on to say how he remembered it as a period of fun which he attributed to the employees and the environment of E. D. Smith. Stories of water fights and cherry throws brought chuckles from the audience.

Mr. Smith also touched on where the company is today and where it's heading. He said, "We see ourselves

as being unique first and foremost. In life now, everything is a number. We look at where the mainstream's going and we go the other way.

"It all goes back to roots and what you stand for. We've learned good lessons and ones we will always remember. We're grateful to

the community and our intentions are to remain in Winona and to maintain our head office there. We feel that if we maintain good corpor-

ate citizenship within the community, we can participate in this environment for many years to come," said Mr. Smith.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY SALT FLEET: Many were on hand to help the Saltfleet Women's Institute celebrate their 56th birthday last Wednesday evening including, from left,

Mayor Bill Sears, hostess Hilda Beachin, secretary Marjorie Kott and Llewellyn S. Smith, executive vice-president of E.D. Smith.