

MARCH 16 - Hillier Hall - 6:00 pm
Annual Spring Supper & Fun Auction
Chair: Lee Ann Scammell

HILLIER WI SPRING SUPPER
The top price for a Peggy Burris pie went for \$85 last Thursday at the annual spring gala. The event was made extra-special with the unveiling of renovations to Hillier Hall that make it more accessible.
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Hillier WI Supper celebrates Spring, accessibility

Andrew McLuhan
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The Hillier Women's Institute (WI) held their annual Spring Supper this past Thursday at the Hillier Town Hall; serving a delectable assortment of ham, scalloped potatoes, salads, beans, and delicious desserts including pies and cakes to die for. An almost full house dined and talked and laughed and spent the evening away.

But the evening was not just about celebrating the arrival of spring with the community and a hearty meal; it was also a banquet to honor and thank those who were indispensable in the accomplishment of a Hillier WI initiative which improved accessibility at the hall, including the construction of new wheelchair-access washrooms.

Speaking about what prompted the accessibility initiative, Peggy Burris had this to say: "Betty Stapleton, she's the lady that prompted us to do this—I mean, she didn't, but she is in a wheelchair, and has been one of our faithful members for the last five or six years. The washrooms were totally inaccessible, she couldn't use them, so it certainly gave us a goal to make things better. If we make things better for Betty, then we make them better for a whole bunch of people in the community. I

think the community will really benefit, because Hillier Hall will become a good place for people to use because of the accessibility."

"We don't take ourselves too seriously; we have a lot of fun, and the auction is probably the best example of how much fun we do have. I want to recognize that all the ladies were involved—not just the committee; and just as important, all of the community. You know, without them sponsoring, and being there to spend their money so foolishly, it wouldn't happen. A lot of these folks were at my door saying, 'Here, I'd like to put this in the auction', without being asked. We don't solicit at all, except from our members; and for the neighbourhood to come in—and they don't come empty handed—they come bearing something. That's the County."

"For home and country"—WI motto

"We estimated in July 2005 that the renovations might cost us \$21,500," said Burris to those gathered. "I want you to know that we didn't do a very good job because when the final bills come in, it's going to cost us \$21,489.77!"

Not a bad estimate. Ernie Parsons, on hand for the ribbon cutting ceremony had this to say: "It's great to hear how the money worked out, and I think the Chamber will expect a

refund of \$11."

Parsons went on to commend WI members on their work. "I know the good things you do locally, and I want to tell you the impact you have on the province. We live a different life than they do in downtown Toronto, and they need to hear in the cities what the issues are here. Groceries don't come from Loblaws, groceries come from farmers that are selling to us from the crops they raise. You can't say it too loudly, and you can't say it too often. Thank-you for what you do, it does make a difference."

Parsons also had another reason to admire the project. "For the Trillium grant, I'm here as your MPP. But I'm also the Parliamentary Assistant Responsible for Disability. It's great that our government would fund it, but it wouldn't have happened without you. It's a wonderful partnership that we can put that money up, but it's more wonderful to see what you can accomplish locally. So thank you, and congratulations."

Paul Morris, who was Acting Mayor at the time, also commended the women. "I wish we'd had the Women's Institute for estimators. Let them do the tax bill. This is a great evening for me, it's a really relaxed night, and I'm proud to be here to represent the mayor. Thank you again."

Burris gave special thanks to those who, in particular, made a large contribution with their time and skill. "I'd like to introduce you to two fellows who were instrumental in doing all the inside work, Mike Heuving and Doug Shaw. I want to thank them for all the extra things they did for us. We thank you for ... going above and beyond the call of duty. John Westerhof and his partner Jason Bonter, who couldn't come tonight, took on the contract for the outside work. And I have to tell you that the way they arranged the ramp, and changed the flagpole so that it fits inside the ramp, and re-arranged the schoolhouse bell so it fits very nicely on the far side—they've done a great job.



Auctioneer Len Smith (left) prepares to find the highest bidder for one of Councillor Peggy Burris' rich pies. One of her banana cream pies went for a whopping \$85—all part of the Hillier Women's Institute Spring Supper fundraiser.

The automatic door is in transit, and they tried to put the final coat on the outside door, but Mother Nature wouldn't co-operate ... so we decided to wait for better weather. John and Jason, again, tried to get all the extra things that weren't in the contract, but they thought it should be done in order to make it look right, and we thank you."

Two plaques were unveiled by Parsons and Morris, along with Burris and Betty Stapleton. One plaque was a credit to the Trillium Fund for their part, and the other indicates that the Hillier Women's Institute was involved.

The Trillium Application Committee was composed of four Hillier WI members: Brenda Dunlay, Lee Ann Scammell, Marilyn Rennie, and Peggy Burris. They put together the application to the Ontario Trillium Fund for money to construct the wheelchair access bathroom and outside ramp. They went ahead with the project even before the funds, which when awarded were a total of \$20,000, came through. The Hillier WI made up the difference. Burris concluded, saying "it wouldn't have happened without all of you. I thank you."

