

## Frontenac County: Women's Institute

# Group expands to urban areas

By ALAN CAPON  
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**T**HE WOMEN'S INSTITUTE has been a rural-based organization for some 85 years but it is now gaining a foothold in urban areas.

A new Women's Institute for women living in the Ernestown, Bayridge and Collins Bay area met for the first time last week and will hold its charter meeting on April 7.

"It is very exciting to get a new branch underway and particularly one in an urban area," said Valerie Smith of Selby, who is the Federated Women's Institute of Ontario branch organizer for the area.

"The WI is changing its focus a little and it no longer concerns itself purely with rural matters but is becoming involved in all kinds of women's issues. We will still be concerned with rural issues but with many other issues too," she said.

To date, 13 women have joined the new WI and Connie Harris is the charter president. The secretary-treasurer is Marlene Wentzell, program co-ordinator is Penny MacNaughton and public relations officer is Molly Woodruff.

Frontenac District president Marion McDonnell will install the new executive and area board director Judy Smith will present the group with its charter.

"I am really looking forward to the meetings," said June Barber, who moved to Kingston Township from Smiths Falls six years ago.

Mrs. Barber belongs to the Rotary-Annes and the Church Union at the Edith Rankin United Church at Amherstview but, recently widowed, she sought additional interests.

"I knew Connie through our church. I learned about the WI, found I liked what it stood for and I decided to join. They have interesting programs and interesting projects that will give me a new interest in life. I am also looking forward to meeting new people."

Molly Woodruffe, who recently moved to Kingston Township from Glenburnie, has been a member of the Glenburnie WI for the past seven years.

"I have enjoyed it very much. I like the friendly atmosphere of the meetings and the projects we undertook. At this new branch I will be helping to get the speakers organized."

The Women's Institutes are wonderful groups, she said.

"The people in the group become close friends."

All the members of the new branch appear very enthusiastic, Mrs. Harris said. Five of the 13

charter members are former WI members.

The Women's Institutes of Ontario began in 1897 when a group of women founded the Women's De-

partment of the Farmers' Institute of South Wentworth — a name that was changed at the second meeting to The Women's Institute of Saltfleet (Stoney Creek) — following a spirited address by Adelaide Hunter Hoodless, who suggested women should create an organization of their own to study homemaking, just as the Farmers' Institute studied farming.

Farmer Erland Lee and his wife Janet were also early WI pioneers and it was at their home in Stoney Creek that the first constitution of the Women's Institute was written.

The Canadian post office recently released four new commemorative postage stamps honoring women and one of these stamps pictures Adelaide Hoodless (1857-1910) founder of the Women's Institutes as well as being the co-founder of the Victorian Order of Nurses.

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SMITH: EXCITED