

Women Aware day attracts 200

Yvette rally inspiring, professor says



The year may be 1880, but members of the University Women's Club of Georgetown presented a look at the past at the Women Aware Day Saturday. Their playlet at the end of the day provided a look at the past and the present of the women's movement, and some hopes for the future. (Herald photo)

Past, present combined

19th century log cabin in 20th century home

By LORI TAYLOR
Herald Staff Writer

An unusual home in Halton Hills has been featured in the most recent edition of a Toronto area Real Estate newspaper.

The home, owned by Rob and Elsie Gordanier, is part modern, although fitted with antique fixtures, and part 19th century log cabin. It's located on 27 Sideroad, just west of the Ninth Line.

The house is finished now, after seven years of work clearing the land, building the new section and renovating the log cabin section, and the Gordaniers have decided to sell the place. They plan to purchase a farm and try their hand at farming.

The Gordaniers first became interested in the idea of a log cabin home when a friend who lives in a log home in Elora introduced them to a man named Mel Shakespeare. Mr. Shakespeare has a log cabin home near Uxbridge, and he has gone one step further in authentic restoration, in that his house has no electricity and no central heating.

Mr. Shakespeare also assembles log cabin homes for a living.

REALLY FANTASTIC
"Mel's house is exceptional—it's really fantastic," Mr. Gordanier said. "He has the original furniture of the period

and it really makes the place. He showed us the houses he'd done and we were really impressed."

At that point, although they weren't prepared to go as far as Mr. Shakespeare had done with authenticity, the Gordaniers decided to use authentic antique fixtures wherever possible. Many of the pieces of furniture in the house are antiques which they have refinished. The door handles, hinges and fireplace fixtures in the home are all authentic.

The log cabin section of the house is from the Ottawa Valley. Estimates place the time of construction of the house at around 1835. Mr. Gordanier said the logs are in good condition because the owners of the home covered them with clapboard siding about 50 years after the cabin was constructed.

The Gordaniers have owned the land for about seven years. They began clearing the property in 1973. Cliff Norton built the shell of the new part of the house, and the Gordaniers moved in and completed the work. They roughed it while the work was being finished, with rudimentary plumbing and other facilities.

MODERN PLUMBING
The house has now a completely modern plumbing, heating and electrical system, although some of the fixtures, such as the pedestal sink in the

log cabin section of the house, are antiques.

The fireplace in the log cabin has a history of its own. It wasn't part of the original cabin, but came from Hamilton by way of Mount Forest. The bricks were originally bought by a former Hamilton hospital administrator, who carried them to Mount Forest a few at a time in his Volkswagen. But his plans to use the bricks himself fell through, and he sold them to the Gordaniers for three cents each. The fireplace is authentic 19th century in design and includes a wopkins baker's oven and ash pit.

Other pieces in the house showed up from all over. The wainscoting came from a house in Milton, while the baseboard and the bathtub came from a house in Mississauga.

"There were quite a few things we wanted to do because we didn't have the authentic materials," Mr. Gordanier said. "We waited five years to put the railing on the stairs to the basement, until we found the right one."

The log cabin section of the house contains a living room downstairs, and three bedrooms and a bathroom upstairs. The new section of the house contains a big farm-style kitchen complete with wood burning stove, the family room and another bathroom.

The log cabin is large, by the standards of the period it was

built. The first floor was originally five rooms, but is now one large L-shaped room. The house is located on a two-acre lot, with a spring-fed pond and an apple and pear orchard. The Bruce Trail runs along the road in front of the house.

FIREFIGHTER
Mr. Gordanier said it was an advantage that he works for the Brantford fire department, because it meant that with his shift work, he was able to spend his days off doing the renovations.

Mr. Gordanier has been doing handiwork and renovations for some years now. He studied architecture at Ryerson for two years and worked with an architectural firm in Toronto on the Commerce Court project. He said he has also built cottages and garages for people.

After all that work to make the house what it is, will it be hard to leave?

"I feel I want to choose the people who are going to live here," Mrs. Gordanier said. "This is a special house, and I don't like to think of somebody coming in and putting up new wallpaper or something. But I guess if they bought the house because they like what it is now, they won't make any changes out of keeping with what we've done."

"When you've done what you've planned, you start looking ahead to something else," Mr. Gordanier said.

By LORI TAYLOR
Herald Staff Writer

The "Yvette" rally in the Montreal Forum recently was one of the most exciting events in Canadian history and showed the spirit of women refusing to be labelled, guest speaker Lorna Marsden told more than 200 women Saturday at the Women Aware conference.

Professor Marsden was the keynote speaker at Women Aware, a special day for women organized by the Georgetown University Women's Club. The day featured seminars on various topics, and films and displays by women's groups and local organizations with services for women.

Professor Marsden teaches sociology at the University of Toronto, where she is Associate Dean in the School of Graduate Studies. She is vice-president of the Liberal Party of Canada and former president of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women.

Professor Marsden said the Yvette rally of 15,000 women who gathered in response to some derogatory comments by Quebec cabinet minister Lise Payette was "inspiring".

"I think what was so inspiring about that rally was to see the majority of the accused rise up to Payette's challenge, to point out what it is to be a woman in Quebec," Professor Marsden said.

The women made it clear they want to combine their traditional areas of expertise with being feminists, she said. "It seems to me the women of Quebec should be an inspiration to us," Professor Marsden noted. "No one really had to organize that rally—the women poured out from all corners of the province. They weren't willing to accept a label put on them by someone else."

WOMEN'S SPIRIT
"If you look at the history of women in Canada, you find again and again the spirit shown by the women in Quebec," she said. "We don't know much about the history of women in Canada, at least not as much as we do about the history of men."

An historian from western Canada is currently conducting a study on the importance of Indian women in the development of the fur trade in Canada, Professor Marsden said. The Indian women formed an important liaison between the white fur traders, communicating between the two groups. Many of the fur traders early in the development of the industry had Indian wives, but when Canada became more

settled, men brought their wives over from Europe and the fur trade gradually developed into a more corporate structure under the control of the different trading companies, Professor Marsden said.

"In any part of an agricultural society, women play a crucial part," Professor Marsden said. "Women working in industry are relatively new in our society."

She said many of her students, and most of the people she talks to, assume that the trend towards women working outside the home is relatively recent, but this is not the case. There is a long history of women working outside the home, usually in domestic work, nursing and other such occupations to help support the family.

"What is new is finding women careers outside the home, and so many women working," Professor Marsden said. "Women are also doing more of the kind of work which is reflected directly in the Gross National Product."

INDUSTRY BASE
The economy has changed in Canada from being based on rural farm communities to being based on industry, Professor Marsden said.

"When the basis of the economy changes, we must all adapt, men and women," she said. "I don't say we can't change the economy if we want. But if women want to be a part of those changes, we have to be in the big leagues, we will be there, and increasingly, we are."

Getting the vote for women was one of the most dramatic events in women's history, Professor Marsden said. It was a major change in people's view of the nature of citizenship, she said.

"When women got the vote, they went on to make changes such as better working conditions for women, which meant better health standards and so on," Professor Marsden said. "By pursuing our own self-interest, or what we thought was right, we helped the country at the same time."

Women are almost entirely out of the fields of science and technology, and that is as recent a development as the entry of women into careers, Professor Marsden said.

"If you look at antiques and in the archives, at the different appliances in use in the home, an overwhelming majority of them were used by women. It's foolish to think that women weren't involved in the technology of the equipment they

used, in the design and manufacture."

Not all technologies have become the exclusive province of men, Professor Marsden said. Women have retained control over some technologies, and men have become less skilled in these areas.

CHILD-REARING
"In Canada, we (women) have a virtual monopoly on child-rearing, and look what's happened to men—they've become virtually helpless in that field. We have to help them regain that technology."

Women don't face much discrimination on an individual basis any more because the Human Rights Commissions are there to help prevent such discrimination, Professor Marsden said. But there is still discrimination by institutions and groups. She pointed out as an example that there are few high school programs which encourage boys to learn domestic sciences and girls, biology and physics.

"If they said boys would have to learn English and girls Greek, we'd be horrified, so why should we accept the present split between boys and

girls?" she asked.

Before concluding her speech, Professor Marsden returned to the topic of the Yvette rally.

"I think the Yvette rally was inspiring, not just because of the women who want to stay in Canada, but because a group of Canadian women want to get control to make changes to benefit themselves and everyone else," she said.

"I think women in Ontario, like the women in Quebec, see Canada as a place to live full, equitable lives."

Following the speech, the women broke up into groups to attend the seminars which made up the main part of the day. Seminar topics included assertiveness training, maintaining a positive self-image, career planning, money management, violence against women, the second fifty years and female sexuality.

The day concluded with a skit presented by members of the Georgetown University Women's Club dramatizing the progress of women since 1929 when the Privy Council in Britain ruled that women were "persons".



Lorna Marsden, former president of the National Committee on the Status of Women, vice-president of the Liberal Party of Canada, and the first woman on the board of directors of Alr Canada, was the keynote speaker Saturday at Women Aware, a special day for women organized by the Georgetown University Women's Club. (Herald photo)



The future looks good

I feel optimistic about the future for women.

"I don't always—when I hear that the government has dropped proposed legislation to provide equal pay for work of equal value, when I see yet another version of that tired old 'ring around the collar' Wisk commercial, when I hear a little boy tell a little girl, 'Girls don't do that.'"

But after the Women Aware day Saturday at Georgetown District High School, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to feel pessimistic about the future of women. Judging by the feelings of the women I spoke to at the end of the day, and conversations I overheard as the day progressed, optimism was the order of the day.

Women Aware was the first in what will hopefully be an annual series of Women Aware days, programs of growth and development of skills women have previously neglected, or been discouraged from pursuing. The day was organized by the Georgetown University Women's Club.

The day began with an address by Lorna Marsden, former president of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, and continued with a series of workshops on a widely varied range of topics. The variety of topics available provided a problem in decision-making for most of the 225 women who registered, because each workshop

continued all day, and only one choice was permitted.

The seminar topics were assertiveness training, career planning, money management, maintaining a positive self-image, violence against women, the second fifty years and female sexuality.

SEEK RESPONSE
At the end of a seminar on female sexuality, leader Judith Golden asked each woman in the room to describe how they felt about the way the workshop had gone.

Almost every woman said specifically that they felt "good", "relaxed", or "mellow", and commented on how they enjoyed sharing their feelings about themselves and their experiences with the other women in the room, even though many of them were total strangers. One or two suggested that a "Man Aware" day might provide similar good feelings for men.

Those relaxed, good feelings seemed to be shared by most of the women I talked to—the topics might range from money management to female sexuality, but the main component of them all was the urging of women to feel not only comfortable with who they are and what they want, but to feel good about it.

There was an air of optimism in the room at the end of the day when the women gathered in the cafeteria after the work-

shops for a presentation by members of the University Women's Club.

The presentation was designed to show how far women have come (or have they?) since 1929, when the Privy Council in England ruled that women are "persons" and entitled to all the privileges enjoyed by persons.

A number of famous men and women were quoted, some sexist and some not. The more outrageously sexist quotations were greeted with rueful laughter and a shaking of the heads by some members of the audience.

SEXIST COMMENTS
And some of those outrageously sexist comments, such as the statement by a Toronto judge that women past a certain age can't be relied on to give testimony in court, were made fairly recently. Those kind of remarks were reminders that we may have "come a long way, baby", but there's still a long way to go. I don't imagine anyone

left the day feeling too complacent.

My feeling of optimism about the future for women is based on two things—the broad range of women who attended Women Aware, of all ages and interests, including one or two children of the female persuasion, and the fact that the workshops provided every woman with something she can take home and apply to her particular situation, to help her to do and be what she wants.

And if those women can do and be what they want, and feel good about themselves without being defensive, maybe one day we'll look back on some of the sexist comments included in that presentation as a bad dream from the distant past.

So here's my thanks to the Georgetown University Women's Club for a fascinating, eye-opening day—you've made me feel optimistic about the future for women. Here's hoping it lasts, at least through the next Wisk commercial.

CANCER CLINIC

The Georgetown branch of the Canadian Cancer Society will be holding a free breast examination clinic June 7 at Georgetown District Memorial Hospital. The clinic is open to all women and free baby-sitting service will be provided. Examinations will be conducted by local doctors in private cubicles. Registration for the clinic, which will run from 12:30 to 8 p.m., will be at the door.



This unique home, located north of Glen Williams on 27 Sideroad, has just recently been finished and now it's for sale. The log cabin section of the house, which is owned by Rob and Elsie Gordanier, is an authentic 19th century log cabin, which was dismantled at its original location near Ottawa, brought to this site, and re-assembled. The price for the house is \$157,000, and includes two acres of land. (Herald photo)