

Women's Institutes a part of Canadian life

By LISA BOONSTOPPEL-POT
The Herald

As the members of the Limehouse Women's Institute recited their prayer at their last meeting... 'Keep us O Lord from pettiness...' the words reveal a certain wisdom. Looking into the Limehouse Memorial Hall where this group meets and seeing the ladies gathered around the table, they're greying heads bent as they continue... 'let us be large in thought, word and deed'... you see that the passage of time has given these women their wisdom. As you look down the table, you wonder, where are the heads not peppered by time, the women that would have the energy to make use of the wisdom? Where are the youth that will keep the group thriving in the years to come?

It's a concern shared by many Women's Institute (WI) members and leaders in Halton Hills, many of whom belong to groups where no member is under 50-years old. Realizing the lack of youth is fast becoming a concern, the world-wide organization is trying to combat declining memberships by revamping the curriculum of the group to appeal to the younger generation.

Glenda Benton, public relations officer for the Limehouse WI admits that at first glance, the group who may not appeal to the younger women who, with the ad-

vance of women in the workplace, have less time for community organization. The institutes tradition of being a rural women's organization may also be a detriment to the organization's ability to attract new members she said.

She thinks people should look beyond the obvious.

And when you do, you find there is a lot more to Women's Institutes than ladies serving meals at a community function and once-a-month meetings.

Started in 1897 by a woman whose baby died from consuming contaminated milk, the organization was designed to better educate rural women. Now, 94 years later, the organization has gone worldwide with 9 million members, 237 of which are from Halton.

Its aim is to assist and encourage women to become more knowledgeable and responsible citizens, to promote and develop family and life skills, to stimulate and develop leadership and to resolve needs in the community.

To reach this goal, institute members attend workshops, seminars, conferences, listen to speakers and go on tours.

Armed with their knowledge and their numbers, WI's have helped make substantial changes in the world.

They've actively approached governments and been partly responsible for such government



Members of the Limehouse Women's Institute, (left to right), Mary Booth, Glenda Benton, Kathleen Lawson, Eva Patterson, Jean Anderson, Agnes Swinkels, Doris Brown, and Jean Kirkwood met Friday afternoon to get ready for their 70th anniversary celebration held last Sunday. The Limehouse group is one of the smallest women's institutes in Halton Hills but its 11 members attend every meeting faithfully. (Herald photo)

resolutions as the Canada/United States control for acid rain, recycling and the environment, agriculture in schools, sex education in schools, breathalyzer and blood tests, for drinking motorists and dental and medical inspections at schools. Currently, WI members are involved in the issue of living wills.

They've also requested the government to legalize the use of

heroin to ease the pain of terminally-ill patients, spoken out against pornography and against the legalization of cannabis.

Not the sort of work one usually associates with WI's.

The latest challenge the organization has undertaken is the revision of the WI handbook.

"Now, it meets the demands of all women. Not just rural women," said Ms. Benton.

Limehouse WI member Mary Booth said the changes are for the better. "Times have changed. We worry about things such as drugs and AIDs which were never worries of the older generation. They were interested in improved home-making."

Along with dealing with current issues and expressing their opinion on political issues, the Women's Institute is also a creative and fun organization, and takes an active role in community betterment.

Limehouse members have, during their monthly meetings, learned how to decorate cakes, stencil and make dried flower arrangements.

"I really enjoy taking part in the workshops and learning new crafts," said the group's secretary, Jean Kirkwood.

As for their community involvement, Ms. Benton summed it up when she said "if someone wants something done in the community, they come to us."

On their own, the 11 members of the Limehouse WI host euchre parties every two weeks, host the April birthday party celebrations at Halton Centennial Manor, support schools with educational kits and organize relief efforts for disaster victims.

These were the things the Limehouse W.I. publicized at their 70th anniversary celebrations held last Sunday in Limehouse Memorial Hall. Numerous citizens and members

of Halton Hill's other WI groups gathered to celebrate the anniversary and the fact that June is WI month.

There are six WI's in Halton Hills: Ashgrove, Ballinafad, Bannockburn, Norval, Silver Wood and Limehouse.

Ballinafad, Bannockburn, and Norval's WI's are much like Limehouse with memberships under 20. But the Ashgrove and Silverwood groups are thriving with memberships of 38 and 22 respectively.

Marion McPhail, president of the Ashgrove WI believes the interesting programs of their group keep the women coming back. "Because we have a large group, we're able to get 'really good speakers,'" she said. "Moreover, this is a rural area and I think many rural women have an interest in the institute."

But she too, believes the organization should change to attract women of all ages and backgrounds.

"Any organization has to keep up with the times," she said.

Silverwood's W.I. can boast of having some of the youngest members in Halton Hills.

"We have fun and we learn different things about ourselves," said president Beth Haines. "I think some of the women in WI are set in their ways and not willing to go with the changes of society. We're not like that."

"We also recognize that many young women have careers and families and have little time to join an organization," she said. "We know their time is valuable so we spend it wisely."

Perhaps the most important aspect of WI's, to its members, is the fellowship.

"The WI has given me a lot of friendship," admits Limehouse WI member Agnes Swinkels who joined the group nine years ago, shortly after immigrating to Canada from Europe.

Fathers face increasing stress

By DR. RICHARD EARLE

Ever since the beginning of mankind, we have been striving for perfection. Our natural desire to be the best has propelled us to greatness. It has sent us into space and it has enabled us to put nature and technology to work for us.

We have always believed that "a person's reach should exceed their grasp," and that "nothing but the best is good enough." For the perfectionist, however, this tendency to strive for excellence can become a painful source of endless stress, especially when it comes to the important area of parenting.

All of us admire people who work hard to improve. But it is important to recognize the distinction between trying to be "better" and trying to be "perfect". With very few exceptions, we would all like to be the perfect parent - never making a mistake, always acting in the best interests of our children, and holding the love, admiration, and respect of the entire family.

Most people recognize that perfection is not achievable. But many of us strive for it nevertheless - and frustration often results. As the gap widens between our ideal image of whom we want to be and the reality of how we see ourselves really performing, we experience more and

more stress and frustration.

Dads in particular are at risk of falling into this trap. Today's fathers have new expectations that put increased demands on them. Not only are Dads expected to be income-earners and excel at their jobs, but they are now expected to participate in child-rearing and house-keeping activities, especially in families where both parents are working.

The end result of all this expectation is increased stress. And although on a purely rational level they know perfection is impossible, Dads begin to think that they can only really succeed if they become perfect in every way.

Of course, that is not true. So here are a few tips to help fathers be "Great Dads," not "Perfect Dads":

1. Give yourself credit for the "good Dad" things you already do. Take some time to think about the valuable contribution you make to your family, and pat yourself on the back!

2. Plan to keep on doing those things. Now that you've recognized them and feel good about them, keep it up!

3. Be honest with yourself. Try to decide which of the important "Dad things" that you should do (but rarely get the chance), are really worth pursuing. Should you reach for them, or should

some be dropped? Even if you never, ever play football with your son, he'll probably turn out okay anyway.

4. Ask your son or daughter what he or she most enjoys doing with you and whether he or she would like to do something more often? You may be surprised to find you're doing better than you think. Or you may realize that sometimes just a little extra effort can make a big difference.

5. Get some feedback from your spouse, and perhaps from a close friend, about what they think are the realistic ingredients of a "Great Dad."

6. Do some reading on stress and how to manage it more effectively. I have found that the IOF Foresters is an excellent source of information on family-related topics. Parents can call 1-800-268-6267 to obtain free booklets on parenting and family stress.

Finally, just the fact that you are taking the time to read this column probably means you really are a "Great Dad" already. That's not an easy title to earn, and you should congratulate yourself on caring so much about your relationship with your family.

Dr. Earle is President of the Canadian Institute of Stress and Consultant to the IOF Foresters Family Stress Program.

PIONEER DAYS SCHEDULE

FRIDAY, JUNE 14TH COMMUNITY DAY

9:00 a.m. - all day - Sidewalk Sales
10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. - Halton Region Health Unit Open House
10:00 a.m. - all day - Dr. Bandoli's Travelling Good Time Show
11:00 a.m. - Bingo (sponsor: Georgetown Lioness Club)
12:00 p.m. - Licensed Patio Garden
3:30 p.m. - Happy Soles Line Dancers
4:00 p.m. - Team Bad Guyz Freestyle Bicycle Riders (sponsor: Ollie's Cycle and Ski)
4:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m. - Ashgrove 4H Club Display
8:30 p.m. - Community Street Dance to the "Buckshot" (sponsor: B.T.A.)

OTHER ATTRACTIONS INCLUDE:

Recipe Exchange, Helpful Kitchen Hints and Demonstrations (sponsor: Foodstuffs)
Jack Layman's Model Steam Engines and Ropemaker

SATURDAY, JUNE 15TH CHILDREN'S DAY

8:00 a.m. - Lions Club Pioneer Breakfast
9:00 a.m. - all day - Sidewalk Sales
9:00 a.m. - Library Book Sale (Church St.)
9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. - Exotic Petting Zoo (sponsors: Victoria Lane, Pet Junction, Final Touch, Paul Armstrong Insurance)
9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. - Ashgrove 4H Display
10:00 a.m. - all day - Dr. Bandoli's Travelling Good Time Show

10:00 a.m. - all day - Face Painter
10:00 a.m. - Ultra Light Plane Display
10:00 a.m. - Alliance Church Sunday School Pioneer Display
10:00 a.m. - Women's Institute Bake Sale (Wesleyan St.)
10:30 a.m. - Storytime with Ruth (Oxbow Books)
11:00 a.m. - Fun Pet Show (sponsor: Pet Junction, James St.)
11:00 a.m.-3 p.m. - Children's Activity Centre (Main and James Sts. (sponsor: Recreation and Parks Department)
11:30 a.m. - Street Parade: Royal Canadian Legion Branch 120 - Georgetown Girl's Pipe Band - World War I Marching Unit - Military Cadets - Classic Cars
12:00 p.m. - Licensed Patio Garden
12:30 p.m. - Bring your decorated bicycles, wagons and prams for a parade (sponsor: Recreation and Parks Department)
1:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m. - Pony Rides, Wesleyan St. (sponsor: North Star Dry Cleaners)
1:00 p.m. - Georgetown Horticultural Society Flower Show and Strawberry Social (Knox Church)
1:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. - Halton Hills Gymnastics Club Demonstration (sponsor: Elizabeth's Fashions)
2:00 p.m. - Ice Cream Eating Contest (sponsor: Cakes of Elegance)
2:30 p.m. - Bubble Blowing Contest (sponsor: Up, Up and Away)
4:00 p.m. - Team Bad Guyz Freestyle Bicycle Riders (sponsor: Ollie's Cycle and Ski)
8:30 p.m. - Street dancing to "Ambush" (sponsor: McGibbon Hotel)

OTHER ATTRACTIONS INCLUDE:

Baton Display Pasta Picture Making (sponsor: Foodstuffs) - Free Lemonade children under 12 (sponsor: John Boughton Jewellers) - Free hot dogs children under 12 (sponsor: Hope Chest)

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