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A place for women

Dublin Women's Institute

BY MANDI HARGRAVE

More than a century ago a farmer's wife started a place for women to meet and educate themselves on various topics.

In 1924, Adelaide Hoodless started an institute for women in Stoney Creek, Ontario. She did so after her baby died from drinking unpasteurized milk. Hoodless was upset that there was no education being offered to women and wanted to start something similar to that which her husband attended, which was a farmer's institute for men.

A group was formed and women learned how to cook and sew properly, as well as other things.

The institute grew and became world-wide. Here in Halton we have our own branch. The Dublin's Women Institute in Rockwood was started in 1924. It was named after an old school that was located on 22 Sideroad. The institute in Rockwood was started by women who lived on the road and in the area and they decided to name it after the school.

There are many levels to the women's institute, such as a branch (Dublin), the district (Wellington-Halton) and an area (Guelph) they belong to, which then goes on to provincial, then national and international.

The 20 women who form the Dublin Women's Institute meet once a month and the location varies as they meet at each other's homes.

The institute offers women various things, often teaching them how to do something. A date has not yet been set, but the women will be learning how to make pies at the next seminar.

Twenty different groups participate in this sort of event and then take the information back to their branch and invite people from the community to come out and participate.

Macy Lasdy chuckled as she said, "I've been married 58 years. I've made pies before but you can learn different techniques."

Lasdy has been a member of the Women's Institute for more than 60 years. She joined when she was 16, the minimum age requirement to join.

"I've belonged to three different branches. I joined at Arkell, south of Guelph, and then I went to Eden Mills and they disbanded so I came to Dublin," said Lasdy.

She also said she thinks it's good for women to meet with one another because you form a bond with people you ordinarily wouldn't at the meetings.

"You educate yourself when you get involved. You get educated about things outside of your home," Lasdy said.

At every meeting the women learn something new. They learn about topics such as health, clean water and education. During the last meeting they learned about the kindergarten system in Halton public schools.

"It was really interesting to hear how things have changed in school," said Lasdy.

The institute does more than just educate women; they help the community when people are in need.

"If there's a need in the community, the Women's institute is there," said Lasdy.

Examples she gave are if there has been a fire or accident victim and they buy items that would help them.

Kathleen Alder, who has been a member for about 25 years, said that they will go out and make lunch for the Habitat for Humanity volunteers in Rockwood when they are working on a house. They also raise money to give away to charities and do things to help the Salvation Army around Christmas time.

The institute supports the 4H Club, cancer and heart foundations, as well as Country Heritage Park. The park has a hall named after the women's institute and the women maintain it.

If you want to join the Dublin Women's Institute you may call Kathleen Alder at 519-856-9353. The fee to join is \$35 per year and you must be at least 16. Currently the age range in the group is 25 - 93, with three members being over 90.

"They've [the elder ladies] have done their thing, now they want to sit back and listen," said Lasdy.

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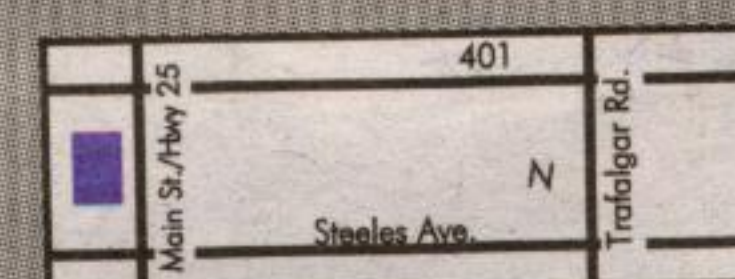
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