

Milestones that Mark Our 50th Year: Viewing the Future

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VIEWING THE FUTURE

We see the future unfolding. We hear an endless variety of voices coming from many sources including our own—faint, echoing voices of the past, harsh, often discordant sounds of the present, and the almost silent voices of the future. Will they be concerned, involved, reconciling, open and creative voices? Will they be sensitive and responsible voices—attuned to the great issues of our times? Or will it be said of us, as one character said of another in Bernard Malamud's *The Assistant*, "She could, with a little more courage, have been more than she was." *The Extension Journal* suggested we ask, "Have we succeeded in helping homemakers understand the why rather than being content with the how?" Set our values on the worker and not on the work.

The 70's and 80's are sometimes described as the years of realities and rethinking. Equal rights and opportunities for all are sought as the idea. Many preferred the term human movement to "women's movement." Our creed reflects the thrusts of the content of Extension Home Economics and its impact continued to be current as it was 50 years ago. The future is an extension of the present—the foundation of Extension Home Economics is firmly bound for tomorrow. The future of our Association, building on its rich heritage, will be the result of the degrees of commitment, the creativity, and the action of those in the profession today and those who join and add their talents in future years.

Now if agents need information on specific questions, they can press buttons on their computer terminals and have answers within minutes, or they can arrange or conduct classes using telecommunications systems from the nearest branch of the University. Their clientele is no longer limited to rural areas. Extension Home Economists now reach out to everyone. The purpose of Extension is still to help people to learn to help themselves by using new and better ways of doing things to make life easier and to assume leadership roles in the community.

Pauline Deem of Montana, writing about the 50th Anniversary of NAEHE gives an inspirational message to Extension Home Economists now and in the future:

"We are indebted to early HDA workers who put forth the effort, braved the hardships, and had the foresight to pave the way for an ongoing program that encouraged growth and dedication for working with people to make better individuals in our world. This is satisfaction enough in evaluating one's own personal involvement as an agent".

Our creativity is without bounds, like a puzzle with no borders. Some of us will work internationally, others in outer space—who knows? Extension Home Economists can become involved internationally by working with Extension programs and other community and village programs in developing countries. We have the knowledge, skills and content that can make a difference in the lives of people here and throughout the world. By being involved in policy making, Extension Home Economists can help improve the quality of life and living conditions worldwide.

"As we sow, so shall we reap." A quote from the first research issue in 1971 of the *EHE Reporter*, when Frances Meyer was Research Chairman, illustrated this truth:

"AS YOU SOW"

Some neophyte farmers once went on the theory that they could eat all their big potatoes and keep the small potatoes for seed. They did this for some time. They ate the big potatoes; they planted the small potatoes. A new understanding of the law came to them when through the years during which they kept up the practice; nature reduced all the potatoes to the size of marbles.

These farmers learned through bitter experience that they could not keep the best things in life for themselves and use the leftovers for seed. The law of life decreed that the harvest would reflect the planting.

Planting small potatoes is still a common practice. We still take the big things in life for ourselves and plant the leftovers. We expect that by some crazy twist of the laws of nature our selfishness will reward us with unselfishness. We cannot eat the big potatoes and still keep having them through the years. We reap what we sow."