



WI Connections

Monthly Newsletter of the
Federated Women's Institutes of Canada

Margaret's Message...

Submitted by President, Margaret Byl

Greetings!

During this Holiday Season, no matter your faith or nationality, we can all share in the feelings of gratitude and giving. Covid 19 has touched so many people throughout the world. Many of us have lost family and friends, but this year, if we all follow the protocols, wear a mask and get vaccinated, if your circumstances allow, there is the hope to be able to gather in person once again and share in the sheer joy of being together.

Covid 19 has taught us that no matter who we are or where we come from or our status in life, we all have a common thread, we are all susceptible to this Corona Virus, BUT we have also joined together in a common cause – the fight to eradicate this awful disease. From the scientists that have developed these life saving



vaccines, to the front-line workers, the nurses, doctors, emergency medical responders, fire fighters, police officers, members of the Canadian Armed Forces, the department store and grocery store clerks, and to the truck drivers that help to continue our chain of supplies, I offer you my sincere gratitude for your perseverance and service.

I recently watched a movie starring Kurt Russell and Goldie Hawn called *The Christmas Chronicles* filmed in 2018. It promoted the “Spirit of Christmas” for all people, young and old. It brought back memories from my childhood of baking sugar cookies, Vanillekipferl (vanilla crescents made with hazel nuts), meringues that were hung on the tree and the most important of all was sharing Christmas Eve with my family.

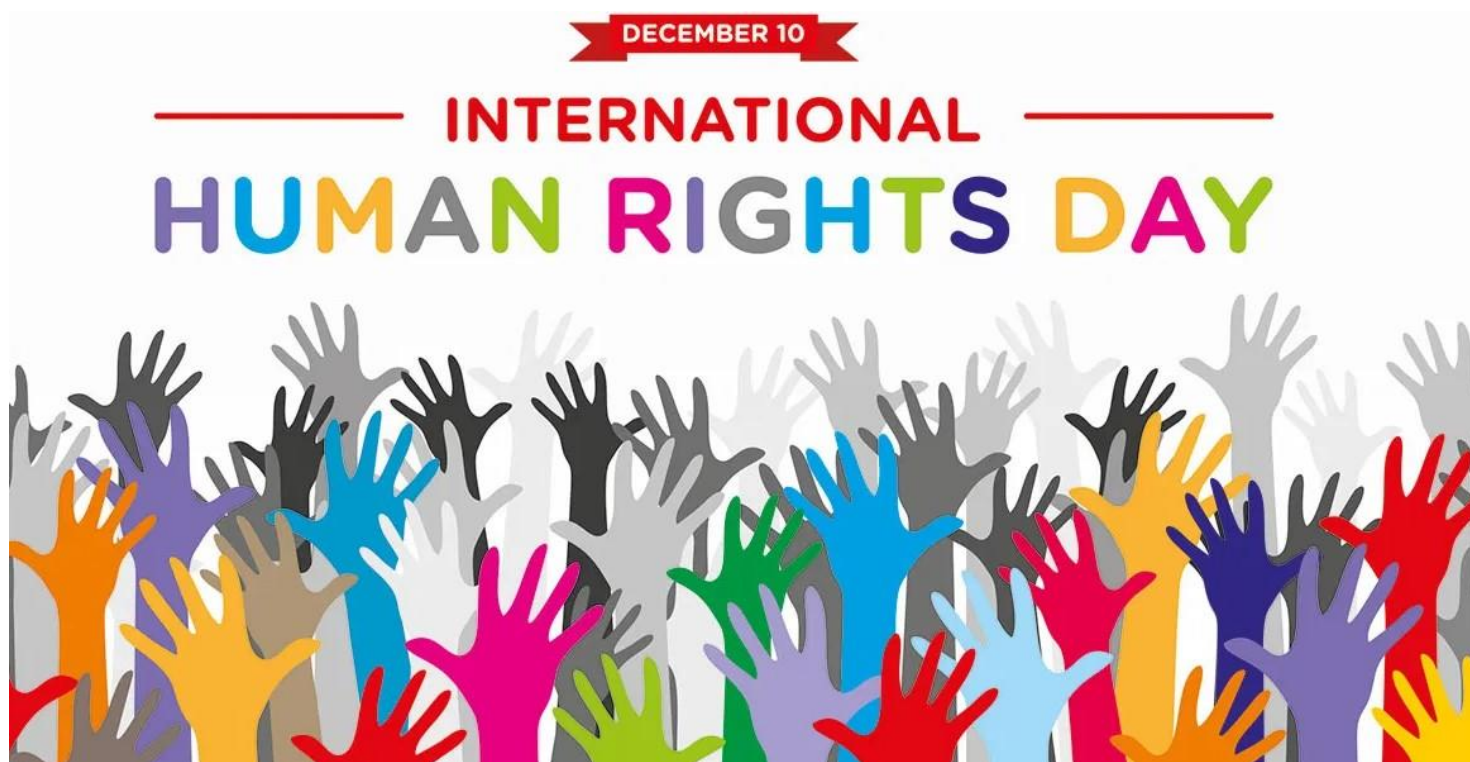
We lived in an old Victorian home. The staircase was tall and long and it led to a landing near the front door. (Funny thing about that staircase and banister, I had remembered it to be long and the banister tall, but when my sisters and I had a chance to go back and visit during an open house, the banister was much shorter and the staircase much smaller than I had remembered). To the right of the staircase was our living room. It had double French doors with crystal handles that would send a myriad of rainbows when the light hit them just right. The children (at that time there were just 4 of us) would sit at the top of the staircase in our pajamas waiting anxiously for the French doors to open and reveal the decorated tree with brightly wrapped presents underneath. Santa would come with a bag full of gifts and our names would be called out.

I remember one year in particular. I had wanted a sewing basket just like the one my grandmother had used. I was terribly disappointed that I had not received it. That year, I had decided that I would save a few gifts to open later (to savour the feeling of excitement when opening gifts over the next few days). I kept back two gifts. My parents and grandmother could see my disappointment and encouraged me to open the rest of my gifts. The first was a new dress and the second a small square shaped box. To my surprise, it was a green and white sewing basket! It was not as large as the one my grandmother owned, but it did bring a huge smile to my face. Lesson learned... big surprises can come in small packages. I have kept that little sewing box to this day.

We didn't have much, but the gifts that we received and memories that come with time and age are the things that I treasure the most. May this year bring you wonderful memories to cherish and share with your loved ones and friends. To those that celebrate Christmas, Merry Christmas to you and to those of other faiths, may the Joy and Peace of the Holiday Season be with you. Stay safe, be healthy and Let Us Not Forget to Be Kind.

Yours for Home & Country - Margaret Byl





Human Rights Day submitted by Margaret Byl

As 2021 winds down and we approach the Holiday Season, I am reminded that Human Rights Day is celebrated every year on December 10 — the day on which the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. John Humphry, a Montreal lawyer was instrumental in drafting the Declaration of Human Rights which was presented as Resolution 217.

Resolution 217 was adopted as a "common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations", the UDHR commits nations to recognize all humans as being "born free and equal in dignity and rights" regardless of "nationality, place of residence, gender, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language, or any other status".

It is sad to say that 73 years later, there is still a need for a universal consciousness to recognize and respect the rights and freedoms of all peoples. Canada is one of the best countries in the world to live in, where freedom and democracy are cherished and education is available to everyone, regardless of age or gender. However, Canada has her own scars. Reconciliation is the first step to healing the wounds. From coast to coast to coast, we must be ever vigilant of the inalienable rights and freedom of all. There is no room for prejudice of religion, colour, political affiliation, gender, or nationality.

From our early beginnings in 1897 and as we sail into the future, the Women's Institutes Movement prides itself on being an all-inclusive organization growing into a national network for women and families to promote leadership and personal development opportunities through education, advocacy and fellowship.



Adelaide Hunter Hoodless Homestead

submitted by Emily Hodgson & Roxana Maturana

This Christmas we are putting on an event at the Homestead entitled, A Victorian Christmas at the Willows. This event will immerse the participants in a traditional Christmas as Adelaide and her family would have celebrated in the 1860s. The historic house will be decorated for Christmas, including a Christmas tree, garlands, and greenery. We will make the house smell and sound like Christmas by having a simmering pot of potpourri on the stove and Christmas songs playing in the house.

The event will be set up as various stations depicting aspects of Victorian Christmas throughout the Homestead. The topics include Christmas Dinner with tasting elements, listening to a reading of *A Christmas Carol*, an ornament decorating craft, Victorian parlour games, and decorating their own gingerbread cookies.

Participants will get to sign up for a 30 minute time slot on Eventbrite (<https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/a-victorian-christmas-at-the-willows-tickets-205150058347>) and the admission price will be by donation on site. It will take place Saturday, December 18th 2021 from 12pm to 4pm.

A Victorian Christmas at the Willows

Come celebrate the holidays at the
Adelaide Hunter Hoodless Homestead

Saturday, December 18th 2021
12pm to 4pm

 **Games**
Crafts
Treats 

359 Blue Lake Rd, St George, Ontario
Reserve your spot on Eventbrite



Doing for Each Other submitted by Margie Taylor WINS President-Elect

It's that time of year, during the holidays, where people give of themselves to help others...volunteering at a homeless shelter, donating toys, adopting a family for the holidays, just to name a few. In the spirit of Christmas, the Churchville WINS Branch is doing just that...donating to their local hospital. The Transitional Care Unit at the Aberdeen Hospital in New Glasgow, NS is collecting small items for the residents to fill up Christmas bags, for example socks/slippers, hats/scarves, candy, magazines, soap/shampoos, etc.

The Churchville Branch wants to be involved in making a happier Christmas for these residents who have been displaced from their homes and are waiting for permanent placement in a nursing home facility. The branch will be purchasing items and donating them to the hospital with the tags reading "supplied by Churchville WINS."

Celebrate the season of giving, give where you can, give when you can, and make someone's Christmas a little brighter. "Life's most persistent and urgent question is...what are you doing for others" - Martin Luther King, Jr.

Saskatchewan Women's Institute Christmas Greetings, submitted by Karen Gerwing

As the newly volunteered President of SWI I would like to bring season's greetings from this prairie province. I emigrated from Australia in 1984 and there has been a white Christmas here every year but one and that was in 1997.

Of course, I haven't been here for all of them as I have tried to spend some of them with my family down under, the last time was in 2017.

Being the middle of summer in Australia at Christmas time it can be quite hot (in the 30's and even sometimes over 40°C and the children are on holidays from school for the summer. The school year coincides

with the calendar year. Starting the end of January and finishing in December.

The town where my parents have retired from farming to, Crystal Brook, holds a Christmas Pageant (parade) on the even years at 6:00 p.m. on a Friday evening. In 2008 Jim, Alison and I participated with a Canadian themed entry.





Ellen's Corner

Ellen McLean has been an active WI member for close to seventy years. Over that time, she has served in many roles including President of the Women's Institutes of Nova Scotia, President of the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada (FWIC) and President of the Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW). Testimony to her excellent leadership and service, Ellen has received a honorary doctorate degree from St. Francis Xavier University, been inducted to the Canadian Agricultural Hall of Fame, received the Order of Canada as well as being the first recipient of the Adelaide Hunter Hoodless Women of the Year.

those in our midst whose cultures and faith traditions differ from our,

It is that wonderful time of the year, - it is Christmas. I love Christmas with all the family traditions, the decorations, inside and out. It is time for Christmas baking, for planning that special Christmas dinner, the hustle and bustle of Christmas shopping (if regulations this year permit all the stores to be open with protocols in place), the family get togethers, (which couldn't happen last year), and perhaps even a Christmas party for a few friends. And not to be forgotten is the wonderful Christmas music and the beautiful church Services. But we must not be so busy that we forget the thousands of people who are refugees. Nor those in our own community who are having a difficult time, - the homeless, those whose income isn't enough to cover the cost of food, the far too many children who live in poverty. We must have room in our hearts for them and help them have a good Christmas.

This is the time to think of peace, love, hope, and even joy in a troubled world. The following lines are my Christmas card to each one of you. There is so much of what I feel is the true meaning of Christmas. And I think those thoughts are very meaningful too for

“Lord, make me an instrument of your peace,
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
.Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
Where there is sadness, joy;
O Divine Master,
Grant that I may so much seek
To be consoled, as to console;
To be understood, as to understand;
To be loved as to love;
For it is in giving that we receive;
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life”

St. Francis of Assisi

MY warmest wishes are sent to you. May this Christmas be a blessed one, with the joy and happiness of the Season

*Merry Christmas to you and yours
from Ellen.*



Christmas Greetings President Elect Lynn MacLean

As a little girl one of the highlights of the Christmas season for me was attending the local school's Christmas concert. Living in a small rural community children attended a two-room schoolhouse with grades primary to three in one room and grades four to six in the second classroom. As there were only about 40 children in the whole school, each grade prepared two or more items to perform.



Attending the concert was a much-anticipated community event, and everyone flocked to the Community Hall to enjoy what the children had prepared. The Hall was transformed into a performance venue complete with a brown curtain separating the stage from the audience. Children in their Christmas-best presented grade appropriate recitations, demonstrated square dancing, performed skits, and of course, sang a medley of Christmas songs, including the whole school singing "We Wish you a Merry Christmas".

Of course, the main event for everyone was the arrival of that jolly old guy in red. The older children waited in anticipation to be called forward and receive their cellophane bag which contained an orange, ribbon candy, and shaped candy. The younger ones looked on excitedly as they awaited their turn to visit with Santa Claus and to receive their bag of goodies.

On one occasion when I was quite small, after Santa arrived, I stood up and instead of heading towards the stage, I turned in the opposite direction towards the outside door. My parents were surprised and went after me, asking me where was I going? My response- to see the reindeer and the sleigh! I was less interested in talking to Santa Claus and very keen on seeing those reindeer up close. I do not remember how they changed my mind, but they did, and I missed my opportunity to have a visit with the reindeer.

So, from my home to yours,

Wishing you much peace and love during the holiday season,

Lynn MacLean, FWIC President-Elect



Empty Bowls, submitted by Linda Hoy, ACWW Canada Area President

The Empty Bowls movement is an international grassroots initiative that dates back to the 1990s and pairs potters with organizations that work to prevent hunger on the local level within communities.

Empty “Empty Bowls” for a second year in a row due to the pandemic-adapted format held the fundraiser at the home of Lucy Doheny, local potter and organizer of the event since 2013. The “no soup” thing is fabulous said the organizer when I asked her on the weekend, In the two years that the event has been converted from a ticketed community meal to a simple bowl sale, the fundraising result has been very positive. This year the 300 bowls sold out in less than two hours raising approximately \$8,000, at least \$500 more than last year’s record-breaking result.



This was my seventh year to support the local food banks. In years prior to Covid, the event was held in a church basement with a simple meal of homemade soup made by volunteers, crusty bread and apples donated by a local grocery store and pitchers of water on the tables. The bowl that I selected this year was a symbol of The Women’s Institute (blue) and Associated Country Women of the World (green). Both organizations have shaped who I am and the values I follow.



Down Memory Lane submitted by Doreen Wall, PEI WI

During my research, I found some reading books on two ladies who started the ACWW. This would be good Christmas reading to refresh our memoirs or even some interesting new facts to light.

The first book is written by Helen Geissinger (grandniece of Madge) and Ruth Fenner. It is a book on Madge Watt and WI stories. Quiet work that goes on under the radar to support women and help them get a leg up. It is the backbone of our country and every other country in the world. It tells about Madge believing so much in the organization that she founded the ACWW in England to support women around the world. (more about this in January 2022 newsletter)

The other book, I thought would be interesting was ‘friendship for pennies’ it was written by Dorothy Drage from Wales, she was also instrumental in starting ACWW in England with Madge. Dorothy was the treasurer of the organization. She wrote the book outlining her travels and connections with ACWW. She said, “Remember little donations spread across a vast membership can sustain this organization”. For anyone who reads these books would be the perfect gift or even for a new member just to light the fire again.

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Grandma's Taffy submitted by Mary Shortt

Our maternal grandmother was the fifth of ten children born to Richard and Calista Cole in 1887 on the “Old Wooler Road” in the Municipality of Brighton, Ontario. She had four boys and one girl – my mother, Zoa Jean.

Grandma was the best, and all of our cousins loved to visit. She frequently had Sunday dinner with our family of five, plus my aunt and uncle and their four children, in her small house in Colborne, Ontario, and it is a warm and happy memory.

Our favourite times were when she offered to do pull taffy. On a cold, snowy afternoon, we could persuade her to cook a batch of taffy candy. It is still a mystery to me how she knew just the right ingredients and how long to cook it. She would then send us out for a dish of clean snow and we could watch in awe as she tested the taffy for just the right consistency. When it was finally right, we would wash our hands and then get them all buttered up.

We would hold out our hands and receive a small amount of the warm, thickening syrup and then immediately begin pulling and folding it till it was cool and too hard to pull anymore. It would be laid out on wax paper in strips and cut into small bars for us to eat and share with our parents, who had been visiting with each other in the living room.

As hard as we try, neither my sister nor I can reproduce the pull taffy for our grandchildren. Mary Shortt, Community York Road WI, Northumberland District, Ontario. This and other short stories are in a book: “Ordinary to Extraordinary 150 stories as unique as the women who lived them.” Produced by The Federated Women’s Institutes of Ontario in celebration of Canada 150.



FWIO

Annual General Meeting



16 DEC

7:00 P.M.

Online via Zoom

Contact fwio@fwio.on.ca
to register!



Guest Speaker

Kelly Franklin | Courage for Freedom

We look forward to sharing our plans and hopes for the future of WI as we embark on our 125th anniversary year.



Manitoba Women's Institute ~ Stepping Up to Support Community For Over 100 Years!

Written by Betty Sawatzky Tuesday, Nov 16 2021, Discover WestMan.com



Have you ever wondered who came up with the idea of having the white lines painted on the sides of highways to determine where the concrete ends and the shoulder begins? Or who started the concept of a public library that's in most every small town? These are just two of the many items the Manitoba Women's Institute (MWI) lobbied for quite a number of years ago.

In 1910 the Institute movement was adopted and developed in Manitoba to help women adapt to the rugged life in the settlement of rural communities. Back in 1910, 111 years ago, new ground was being broken and families travelled from other parts of Canada and from overseas to settle in Manitoba's budding communities.

'In the early days, fostering of the Women's Institute movement in Manitoba was assigned by the Department of Agriculture and Immigration to the Manitoba Agricultural College. With the encouragement of agricultural extension staff, branches sprang up throughout the province,' states the MWI website.

'The purpose of the first Institute was to raise the standard of homemaking. In the early minutes the following words were recorded: "*A nation cannot rise above the level of its homes; therefore, we women must work and study together to raise our homes to the highest possible level.*"'

The MWI was a local support for women, where they could learn from each other and provide emotional support to



growing families and home makers. The movement grew to where they could advocate for community needs and new ways to improve living conditions in rural communities.

Today's lobbying efforts include food security, mental health services, even improvements in cell phone service.

Over the years the MWI has supported many initiatives around the world, each year championing a specific fundraising initiative.

It was 3 years ago when Binscarth resident and Manitoba's MWI Western Region representative, Peggy Bradshaw, posed the question for the MWI to support a provincial incentive, a local project. Bradshaw is a member of the MWI-Silverton Chapter, and her fellow members welcomed the idea.

The incentive was embraced by the provincial committee and the first 'Made in Manitoba' Project began, with awareness and fundraising directed at their first project, A Port in a Storm, a housing project where folks from rural and northern communities could go to stay while getting medical treatment in Winnipeg.

The second year's project was to support The Brandon Bear Clan. Bradshaw says the support was astounding with bags and boxes of items donated and then delivered to the Brandon organization.

She's hoping this year's incentive will be as successful as last year's project with the focus on the local 'safe houses', provincial shelters that are under the umbrella of the Manitoba Association of Women's Shelters.

Bradshaw shares the MWI's vision statement, 'MWI strengthens women, families, and communities' and this was a very fitting project, "especially since what we've seen with the pandemic and the isolation that women have been in and it seemed that there is more domestic abuse, more difficulties rising," she says.

"The shelters across Manitoba are also finding it hard to administer their programs, money is less to work with and yet there was a larger need."

"It doesn't have to be one shelter," she adds. "It could be the one in their area. That's why we broadened it and that's also why we decided to reach out to the communities and ask communities to help us help others."

Safe houses are often unknown in many communities due to safety precautions for their clients. But the needs can be many. Women and their children may have to leave their homes at a moment's notice with very few essentials with them. Local shelters welcome hygiene kits, clothing items, or cash donations to purchase necessary items or put towards the counselling programs. Bradshaw encourages folks to contact their local shelter and ask if there are any specific items that they need.

When looking at the many needs in any community, Bradshaw shares how the Manitoba Women Institute has been a strong support over so many years and in so many different ways.

In looking ahead, she says the 'Made in Manitoba' project is definitely growing.

"I don't know where the next year will go but it is a growing thing."

"Really, a little-known organization that's been around for a long time is stepping up and the communities are stepping up with them, and that's what makes it great, because we have been through an awful time in these last 2 years."

"It's been a terrible time and just to have some good news that's giving hope," she shares. "But we're not giving up.

We're not going to say, 'Oh we can't do this because we're in a pandemic.'



“No, that’s the time when you find what people are really made of and that’s the proof in the pudding for sure!”

The Manitoba Women’s Institute will be continuing the fund-raising and awareness campaign for women’s safe houses and shelters throughout the months of November and December.

Manitoba Women’s Institute is a member of the Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW) with a membership of 9 Million women in 72 countries; ACWW has consultative status at the United Nations, with members serving on such UN bodies as the World Health Organization, Food and Agricultural Organizations, UNESCO and UNICEF. Manitoba Women’s Institute is also a proud member of the Federated Women’s Institute of Canada (FWIC/WI Canada).

Visit www.mbwi.ca for more on the MWI. Please contact them for ways to reach out and contribute to the local shelters in your area.

Pumpkin Ice-Cream submitted by Denise Joss - taken from (Allrecipes.com)

1 cup pumpkin puree

- ½ cup packed brown sugar
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon ground ginger
- ¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 quart vanilla ice cream, softened

I would double this recipe and pour it into a 4 litre empty ice-cream pail after blending all the ingredients together.

Recommend making this in 2 batches.

Taste the first batch –if you want to change any of the spice amounts this is the time to adjust before you make the 2nd batch.

For a Frozen Pie Treat:

Combine pumpkin, brown sugar, salt, and spices with a rotary beater. Blend in ice cream. Pour into a cooked pie shell. Freeze until firm. Serve frozen, garnished with whipped cream and walnut halves.





Let's pause together...

And enjoy our WI Canada FWIC Patchwork Christmas Get Together
Wednesday, December 8th, 2021 at 7pm Eastern Time

Bring a cup of tea and enjoy greetings from each province of Canada. Skits, stories, demonstrations - it will be a patchwork offering to send out 2021 and welcome 2022. Time: Dec 8, 2021 7:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86153984780...>

Meeting ID: 861 5398 4780

Passcode: 046578



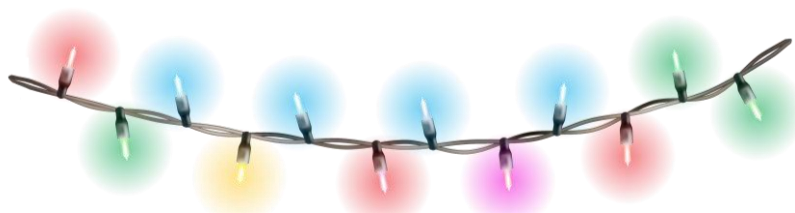
WI Canada Leadership Modules... Communications Training for Tomorrow's Leaders

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1-Intro to Leadership | 2-Public Speaking and Networking |
| 3-Communications | 4-History and Structure of WI |
| 5-Bylaws & Programming for WI | 6-Setting goals for your Branch - SMART Goals |
| 7-Facilitation Techniques and SWOT applications | 8-Governance and Board participation |
| 9-Conflict Resolution | 10-Wrap Up Session |

info@fwic.ca or angela.scott@bellaliant.net

Membership Round-Up

In November we had a round table on Membership. Each province participated in specific questions, facilitated by President Margaret Byl. Please watch for a summary in the January 2022 issue of WI Connections.



WI Canada FWIC

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