

Monthly Newsletter of the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada



WI Connections!

*May your houses be filled with
the Light of the Season.*

Margaret's Message, Submitted by President, Margaret Byl

On behalf of FWIC/WI Canada I bring you Season's Greetings! It is that time of year once again when everyone begins that hustle and bustle of the Holiday Season. Where has the time gone? Last month, the FWIC /WI Canada team was busy with closing out the Online Auction and presenting a Virtual Gathering, "WI Remembers" on November 10th. On November 11, I had the privilege of attending in Ottawa to lay the wreath at the moving and emotional ceremony that took place at the National War Memorial. It is not too late to send a Holiday Greeting or just a "Thinking of You" card to a member of the Canadian Armed Forces who may be stationed away from home during the holidays. Here is a link to the Government of Canada's National Defence Department for information on how to send your correspondence.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/contact-us/write-troops.html> To the members of the CAF, thank you for your Service!

Thanks to Lynn MacLean and the Outreach and Communications Team another Virtual Membership Rally was held on Nov. 16th. There were many interesting and exciting ideas exchanged! Thank you so much to all the participants. If you missed it, Lynn will be posting it online in our YouTube Channel soon.

The FWIC Across Canada Book Club hosted by Elizabeth Young in Newfoundland continues to grow with the latest meeting taking place on Nov. 24th.

I had the honour of bringing greetings on behalf of FWIC/WI Canada to the members of FWIO at their Annual General Meeting, which was held on November 25th in Brantford, ON. Congratulations to FWIO President Michelle Phillippi and her newly elected Board of Directors. A busload of the AGM attendees stopped by the Adelaide Hunter Hoodless Homestead for a tour and gift shop shopping. Thank you to

Amanda Weber, Museum Manager and volunteers Barbara Sheardown and Rosemary Evangelista for receiving our guests. Renovations and updates continue to happen at the Homestead. Thanks, Linda Zelem, for managing the project!

There are many holidays celebrated in December. Christmas, Hanukkah, and Kwanzaa are some of the most popular. If you are unfamiliar with Kwanzaa, it celebrates African heritage and culture and is a time for family, friends, and giving gifts. Dec. 8th is Rohatsu (Bodhi Day) — Buddhist and on Dec. 26: Zarathosht Diso (Death of Prophet Zarathustra) — Zoroastrian. For a more comprehensive list of Holidays and Observances in December there is a great daily calendar online from Good Housekeeping <https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/holidays/a41136051/december-holiday-and-observances/>

Special thanks to Angela Scott for the wonderful newsletter – WI Connections. The subscriptions continue to grow. It is with gratitude for an amazing team of volunteers that sit on the FWIC/WI Canada Board of Directors and our Committees that I look forward to celebrating the Holidays. The holidays are full of fun and laughter and friendship, giving and receiving. I will leave you with this thought – Accepting a gift given in friendship is also giving a gift of appreciation for the thoughtfulness. Let's remember the people of the Ukraine and people all over the world that need some comfort this winter. What random act of kindness have you received lately? Remember to pay it forward.

My wish for you this Holiday Season is that Peace, Love and Joy enter your home and your heart. Stay warm, safe and healthy. Yours for Home & Country. Margaret Byl #WI Cares



Adelaide Hunter Hoodless Homestead Report Submitted by Amanda Weber, Museum Manager



Tis the season to get Victorian festive!

This is a sneak peek of our parlour Christmas tree, but zoomed in so that you'll have to see the full tree yourself 😊 Victorian Christmas tree decorations were full of scrappy methods to save what you could. This included natural items, like dried summer flowers, pinecones, dried fruits and strung popcorn, amongst others!

We are having such a wonderful time at the Homestead! The holiday spirit is in the air and the museum is wonderfully decorated with all of the Christmas sights and sounds. We have numerous holiday events happening around the museum, which you can find more information about on our website and social media. All tickets for regular museum admission and special events MUST be purchased in advance on Eventbrite.

As we near the end of 2022, we look towards 2023 with lots of hope and anticipation for what the new year brings for the museum! We have so many exciting events planned that we can't wait to share with you. For now, we have a couple things that we wanted to share with you.

We are developing a **new exhibit** to be displayed from February – November 2023. We need your help! Do you, your family, or your branch, have a favourite recipe you enjoy cooking? Is there one recipe that everyone *always* asks you to give when you bring over a certain dish? If so, we want to hear from you! We are looking for any and all cherished recipes to be shared with us to potentially add to our main 2023 exhibit. If you have a recipe, please send a copy of the recipe to us at info@adelaidehoodless.ca or call the museum at 519-448-3873 for alternative methods.

Did you also know that you and/or your branch can support the museum through our membership program. Named Friends of Addie, membership benefits include unlimited tour opportunities, a 3 page monthly newsletter highlighting museum events and exciting articles, individual membership cards, a Homestead pin (new individual members only) and 24 hour advance notice of all events. A year-long individual **Friends of Addie** membership is \$15/year and **Addie's Group of Friends**, a special WI branch membership option, is \$20/year + \$1/member.



ADELAIDE
HUNTER
HOODLESS
HOMESTEAD

Call for Recipes!

Do you have a cherished family recipe? If so, consider sending it to the museum to be featured in a new exhibit!

Entries must be received by January 11th, 2023.





Christmas Greetings From Across Canada

In November of this year, we asked each province to share their Christmas wish for WI, and here are the answers and Christmas wishes we received.

Quebec WI

Holiday Greetings to everyone from the Quebec FWIC Rep. Judy Page Jones. On my Santa wish list for our organization, is that we remain active in our communities and that we continue to increase our membership in all our Provinces.

Prince Edward Island WI

To all the directors, executive board members, office staff and provincial presidents, I want to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. May the New Year bring peace and harmony and lots of good luck.

This is a good four- way test of what we think, say or do:

1. Is it the TRUTH?
2. Is it FAIR to all concerned?
3. Will it build GOODWILL and better FRIENDSHIPS?
4. Will it be BENEFICIAL to all concerned?

Following these will bring a better world to live in?

Doreen Wall, FWIC REP for PEI

Christmas is a time when we think of family and friends both near and far. I enjoy sending Christmas cards and I enjoy receiving them.

The many Christmas traditions such as gather friends and loved ones, and the wonderful church services are the things I look forward to. Driving around to view all the beautiful decorations is another enjoyment. I usually take some friends along with me and afterwards we go out for hot chocolate or coffee. May peace, joy, and hope be yours this holiday season and throughout the year.

Miriam, Provincial President PEI WI

Manitoba WI



Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays to All!

Manitoba WI is excited as we prepare to dive into our programming and expanding our Virtual presence for 2023. December 5th at 7PM (CT) MWI will be holding a Zoom presentation on “Your Favourite Christmas Decorating Idea/Tip”. This Zoom session is FREE and open to all who would like to join, no matter where in the world you call home. Send us a picture of your idea and we will include it in the evening’s program. Email mbwi@mymts.net if you would like to participate and we will email you the zoom link.

January will see MWI continuing with our “Women in Leadership” series. Our first speaker was Minister Rochelle Squires who is responsible for our Manitoba government portfolios focused on women and families. She was a dynamic presenter and had many excellent comments for women who might aspire to hold a role in government.

In April, our spring AGM will be held in combination with our MWI Women’s Day. It will be a hybrid event to enable those living close to come experience the speakers in person and those living farther away to enjoy the event from the comfort of their own homes.

Please follow Manitoba Women’s Institute on Facebook and get firsthand information on all our coming events.

Wishing you a safe and happy Christmas, along with a wonderful start to your New Year.

Debra Barrett, MWI President

Women’s Institute of Nova Scotia

On behalf of WINS I would like to extend best wishes for a safe and healthy holiday season to all WI and FWIC members from the east coast to the west coast. It is our wish that we all stay safe throughout this challenging time for everyone. As we move forward into 2023 may we see a way to reach out to those who are less fortunate than ourselves and do something special for even just one person in our area.

Blessings for a Joyous Holiday Season, Jacqueline Melvin President WINS

May the spirit of Christmas infuse your life and that of your family members with hope, positivity, and joy.

From my home to yours

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

- Lynn MacLean



My wish for WI is...

for branches and members to try the ideas

that have been suggested in the Social

Media workshop and the Membership Rally.

The Turkey Shot Out of the Oven
, submitted by Eleanor Lilly...



The Turkey Shot Out of the Oven
- Jack Prelutsky

The turkey shot out of the oven
and rocketed into the air,
it knocked every plate off the table
and partly demolished a chair.

It ricocheted into a corner
and burst with deafening boom,
then splattered all over the kitchen,
completely obscuring the room.

It stuck to the walls and the windows,
it totally coated the floor,
there was turkey attached to the ceiling,
where there'd never been turkey before.

It blanketed every appliance,
it smeared every saucer and bowl,
there wasn't a way I could stop it,
that turkey was out of control.

I scraped and I scrubbed with displeasure,
and thought with chagrin as I mopped,
that I'd never again stuff a turkey
with popcorn that hadn't been popped.

New Brunswick WI

As President of the New Brunswick Women’s Institute I am delighted to send warm wishes for a safe and healthy holiday season, especially for all those living in nursing homes and the staff who give so much every day. My wish for WI would be to help each other as we go through times of change and grief, remembering each other as we consider the Mary Stewart Collect.

Sharron Adams, Provincial President NBWI

I wish you all a time of peace and pause in our busy lives to enjoy the wonder of the season. The wonder and magic of Christmas makes me think of stars shining bright in the cold winter’s night. Peace and blessings to you all.

My WI Christmas wish is simple, I hope WI member will know how important they are as individuals to our collective success and community advocacy. Everybody matters, past and future members, and together we can change the world by our example of kindness and understanding with each other.

Angela Scott, Provincial Rep for NBWI

Alberta WI

Christmas Greeting from Linda Mason - FWIC Director/Treasurer & Alberta’s Provincial Representative

I hope your halls are decked with joy, love, and laughter. On Christmas Day, may have everything you need to fill your home with peace and happiness! The spirit Christmas is bright and magical and when you start to feel it, it will enchant you



you
of
with

hope and wonder that lasts beyond the holiday where we see ourselves moved by generosity, inspired by hope and uplifted by love, not only for ourselves but for the whole evolving world!

What is Christmas? It is tenderness for the past, courage for the present, hope for the future. It is a fervent wish that every cup may overflow with blessings rich and eternal and that every path may lead to peace.

This past year has been very busy with many new and exciting projects being created for WI Members all across Canada. Your FWIC’s Directors work diligently in helping to make sure that Women’s Institutes remain strong and vibrant and to become recognized all around the World for the great work that they have done and continue to do!

My Christmas Wish for all Women’s Institutes is that they gain many more new members in order to be able to continue to do all their great work!

Merry Christmas to all and sending wishes for a New Year full of promise and new opportunities!

I thank God for all the blessings in my life, and ask for more WI members. We have so much to share. Merry Christmas.

Diane Dammann, President Alberta WI



Newfoundland & Labrador

Seasons Greetings

As this year draws to a close, I would like to contact our members, provincial and national, to extend warm wishes for the Christmas season. May your hearts be full as you gather with family and friends. Enjoy the music, marvel at the décor, share the food especially the baking! Share with those who are in need, offer comfort where you can, and most of all be kind.

We hope the new year puts covid behind us, allowing us to meet face to face in our gatherings, bringing back members who were unable to participate during those trying times. I wish you all a Merry Christmas and health and happiness for the New Year on behalf of the Board of Directors and myself of NLWI.



Elizabeth Moss, President, NLWI

Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario

Greetings from Ontario for the Holidays!

President Michelle Phillippi, Representative Linda Zelem and all Ontario WI members, wish everyone a healthy, safe and happy season.

May all your dreams come true and may all our invitations to WI meetings be accepted. We are unstoppable after celebrating 125 years improving the lives of all persons.



British Columbia WI

I would like to wish all of us, our families and our friends a wonderful, and healthy Christmas Season. The Wi is an organization based on friendship and giving, to each other, our communities and the world. WI practices the caring and giving of the holidays all year round and I know we will continue to do so.

Here's to the years past, and many more to come, carrying on the good work that we do. May you and yours be blessed not only for the holidays but in the years to come.

Brenda Devauld, President British Columbia WI

ACWW Update submitted by Linda Hoy

It has been a very busy month at work and I completely let the deadline for the December WI Connections go by. There is a lot happening at ACWW these days. More and more information on the Triennial World Conference will be coming out soon. The ACWW Board will be meeting in January in Ottawa. Following that I would like to host a ZOOM Q & A for those planning to attend the World Conference in Malaysia. Final deadline to register for the conference is December 31st, 2022.

Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer

As the holiday season of 1938 came to Chicago, Bob May wasn't feeling much comfort or joy. A 34-year-old ad writer for Montgomery Ward, May was exhausted and nearly broke. His wife, Evelyn, was bedridden, on the losing end of a two-year battle with cancer. This left Bob to look after their four-year old-daughter, Barbara.

One night, Barbara asked her father, "Why isn't my mommy like everybody else's mommy?" As he struggled to answer his daughter's question, Bob remembered the pain of his own childhood. A small, sickly boy, he was constantly picked on and called names. But he wanted to give his daughter hope and show her that being different was nothing to be ashamed of. More than that, he wanted her to know that he loved her and would always take care of her. So, he began to spin a tale about a reindeer with a bright red nose who found a special place on Santa's team. Barbara loved the story so much that she made her father tell it every night before bedtime. As he did, it grew more elaborate. Because he couldn't afford to buy his daughter a gift for Christmas, Bob decided to turn the story into a homemade picture book.

In early December, Bob's wife died. Though he was heartbroken, he kept working on the book for his daughter. A few days before Christmas, he reluctantly attended a company party at Montgomery Ward. His co-workers encouraged him to share the story he'd written. After he read it, there was a standing ovation. Everyone wanted copies of their own. Montgomery Ward bought the rights to the book from their debt-ridden employee. Over the next six years, at Christmas, they gave away six million copies of Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer to shoppers. Every major publishing house in the country was making offers to obtain the book. In an incredible display of good will, the head of the department store returned all rights to Bob May. Four years later, Rudolph had made him into a millionaire.

Now remarried with a growing family, May felt blessed by his good fortune. But there was more to come. His brother-in-law, a successful songwriter named Johnny Marks, set the uplifting story to music. The song was pitched to artists from Bing Crosby on down. They all passed. Finally, Marks approached Gene Autry. The cowboy star had scored a holiday hit with “Here Comes Santa Claus” a few years before. Like the others, Autry wasn’t impressed with the song about the misfit reindeer. Marks begged him to give it a second listen. Autry played it for his wife, Ina. She was so touched by the line “They wouldn’t let poor Rudolph play in any reindeer games” that she insisted her husband record the tune.

Within a few years, it had become the second best-selling Christmas song ever, right behind “White Christmas.” Since then, Rudolph has come to life in TV specials, cartoons, movies, toys, games, coloring books, greeting cards and even a Ringling Bros. circus act. The little, red-nosed reindeer dreamed up by Bob May and immortalized in song by Johnny Marks has come to symbolize Christmas as much as Santa Claus, evergreen trees and presents. As the last line of the song says, “He’ll go down in history.”

Read more <https://oliviral.com/keanu-reeves-makes-a-rare-appearance-with-his-gf-alexandra-grant-appears-happier-than-ever/>

Online Auction



FWIC WI Canada held its first online auction from October 18th to November 1st using the Bidding Owl software. There were thirty-nine items donated and the pictures and a brief description of the items were displayed on the online site. Approximately twenty-nine individuals opened an account and bid on the various items. The auction generated approximately \$700 in revenue for FWIC WI Canada. Thank you to everyone who donated items to the auction as well as those that made bids and those that won their bids. FWIC WI Canada would love to hear about your

experience with the online auction. Please send comments to Lynn MacLean at president-elect@fwic.ca.

FWIC WI Canada Social Media Activity

You +



Why WI? + =



Facebook Post

During the Social Media Workshop, the presenters proposed a simple activity that could be used to make a Facebook page.

Step One: Each member can reflect on why they joined WI -what attracted them to the organization.

Step Two: Have each member individually write their “why” on a white board

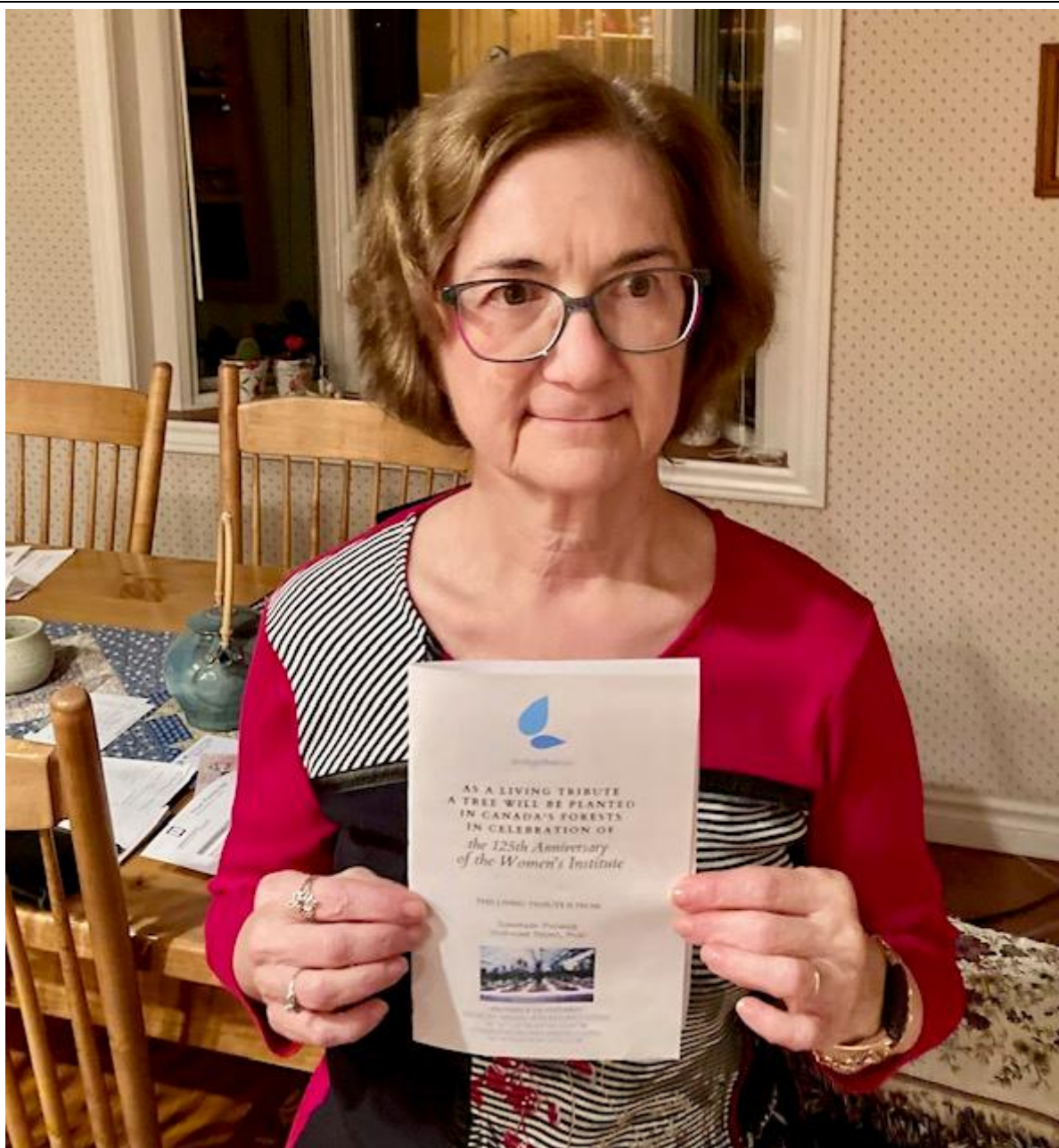
Step Three: Have a member take the picture of each member holding the sign- members can be seen or not-up to the branch.

Step Four: Make a collage of the pictures or post the individual pictures on Facebook

Step Five: Send pictures to president-elect@fwic.ca. FWIC will create a collage by province.

Let's plaster Facebook with WI!





*In Celebration of
the 125th Anniversary
of the Women's Institute*

*This Living Tribute is from:
Annemarie McDonald
Silver-Wood Branch, FWIO*

*Tree Location:
Province of Ontario
Sudbury Mining Site Reforestation
Conservation Area Tree Recovery*

Quebec WI Article by Louise Smith

On Friday, November 11th, the Missisquoi County Women's Institutes, comprising of the Dunham and Fordyce branches, met at the stone cairn on the main street in Dunham just before eleven o'clock. Joining members of the two branches was Kevin Mitchell, representing the town of Dunham, and a few other observers.

Joyce Martin welcomed everyone to the ceremony. Shirley Vaughan read a moving poem. Candy Coates laid a wreath for the Dunham branch. Norma Sherrer laid a wreath for the Fordyce branch. Michilynn Dubeau and Louise Smith laid a wreath for the Missisquoi County. Elizabeth Milroy laid a wreath on behalf of all women's institutes in Quebec. Kevin Mitchell laid a wreath on behalf of the town of Dunham. Ben Martin played Taps on his saxophone and then Reveille. Norma Sherrer ended the ceremony with a prayer for peace, which is much needed in today's world.

The ceremony was the warmest Remembrance Day in recent history. Often the ground is snowy and the wind is bitter on the main street of Dunham. This year was easier for all in attendance. The two minute silence was punctuated with the sound of passing traffic. Decades ago, drivers would stop and observe the two minutes of silence. Those days are gone, but we have to not ever forget the sacrifice of those who served, whether or not they fell in battle, or returned as veterans.

The town offered to keep the wreaths on display, in storage, for next year. The town has a very good relationship with the two branches and the cairn itself. After all, Missisquoi County is the birthplace of Elizabeth Ann Beach, the founder of the first Women's Institute branch in the province of Quebec. A scholarship in her name is offered every year to a graduating student of Massey-Vanier.



An Evening in Paris by Jennie Foley, Stoney Creek, Ontario

INTRODUCTION:

My name is Jennie Foley, and I am an Associate Member of the FWIO, having previously been active in the Stoney Creek Charter and Binbrook WI. Prior to my retirement I was a Systems Analyst at the (former) Chedoke-McMaster Hospitals in Hamilton where my duties included project management and the design and implementation of large computer systems. I am trained also in industrial engineering techniques (time and efficiency studies). I owned, for several years, a private consulting company.

BACKGROUND:

I have long been a supporter of the Women's Institute, having initially volunteered at the Erland Lee Museum Home and indeed had worked in the struggle to have it reopened after its unfortunate closing in 2010. I am also an Associate Member of the National Federation of Women's Institutes (NFWI- based in the UK) where the organization has experienced a renaissance and now have about 220,000 members in 6,300 branches. Most significantly, many younger women are joining. However, the Canadian experience, particularly concerning the FWIO, has been somewhat different, with declining membership numbers and branches closing throughout the province.

Why am I doing this? No one asked me to investigate the success of the Paris "Women Inspiring Women" WI branch. I went out of curiosity and a wish to see WI as a whole succeed. After telling a number of other WI members my plans, I stated that I would write something up on my findings to share with them: hence, this report. All observations, errors and omissions are entirely my responsibility, although I have been as careful as I can to present an honest analysis; ultimately, it remains simply my opinion.

The formation of the Paris "Women Inspiring Women" branch has been a very encouraging development, and I have been following their activities on Facebook since their beginnings. When I attended the Hamilton Area Convention in October of this year in Fonthill, I was able to introduce myself to several of the Paris WI members and was invited to be a guest at their meeting. I was very keen to learn the secret to the success of the Paris branch!

I set the date of this visit as November 9th, and promptly booked a room at the Arlington Hotel in Paris. I also intended to spend the afternoon doing family history research at the Paris Museum as my husband's father was born and raised in Paris, allowing me to fulfill two personal ambitions in one visit.

PARIS "WOMEN INSPIRING WOMEN" OBSERVATIONS:

After a pleasant afternoon and a delicious meal at the Arlington I was picked up by two WI members – Michelle and

Sue, whom I had contacted by Facebook and who had offered me a lift to the 7 pm meeting at the Paris Agricultural Centre on the fairgrounds.

At the building I entered a large room with about 24 WI ladies (about half the membership was in attendance that night) and was introduced to their President, Elaine Tully. The evening was a wonderful experience, although markedly different than any WI meeting I have ever attended. What were the differences?

- The absence of a head table;
- no flags or other paraphernalia
- no toasts to Queen and Country
- no singing of God Save the Queen or O Canada
- no recitation of the Mary Stewart Collect
- no traditional singing of the WI Ode (although the members were introduced to it for the first time at this meeting and will be considering whether to adopt it)
- no prayer
- no reading aloud of the minutes of the last meeting
- no printed agenda
- no collection of “Pennies for Friendship” (they write a cheque once a year)

The most striking contrast was a lack of *formality and ritual* that was both time-saving and refreshing! The President, Elaine Tully, stood casually at the top of a series of rows of long cafeteria-style tables, and did not run the meeting so much as enable the members to self-organize. Upon her prompting, one after another member stood and invited other members to join them in a project or give updates on activities already underway. One offered to teach soap making in her home; another had an idea for a craft-making cards and tags at a local business; another looked for help with the WI float for the Paris Santa Claus parade, the work to be done at a local farm. I learned that there are active groups within the Paris WI that meet separately to pursue a variety of interests: a book club; TWO! dinner clubs; crafting (including knitting); game playing (at the local Arlington pub); a workshop on making preserves and other related items such as pies; a sing-along group and a bewildering assortment of other activities.

Each was met with enthusiasm and promises to contact through social media such as Messenger or Facebook to arrange attendance and meeting times/places. The energy level in the room was amazing. Out came cell phones to check their calendars for availability or to sign up on the spot, displaying great ease with modern technology.

The Role Call was part of their evening, and the theme was “What makes you really laugh?”. Everyone was given a chance to speak and the stories they told were great. Everyone was laughing with them as each told a funny story. Mine was my habit of taking pictures of my food when we dine out, much to my husband’s embarrassment, and then posting the photos on my Facebook page. I found out that I was much like many of the other women, and what makes

me laugh is laughing at myself!

Our speaker was Helen Hack, who gave us a very entertaining view on seeing the humour in our lives. Her interpretation of 'The Three Little Pigs' and the story of 'A Trip to the Gym' were priceless; you just had to be there to experience it!

Next, we played a 'game'. We were all given a paper that was divided into twelve squares, each one having a different category such as 'find someone who is retired', or 'find someone who has 3 or more siblings'. We were then instructed to circulate around the room and have someone put her first name in a square that matched her situation. This was a great way to meet new people and get to know them a little better. I was a very popular woman that evening, being one of only a handful who were retired, and my signature was consequently well sought out. Afterwards the woman who had led the game asked everyone to stand as their categories were called out. I watched closely and learned a lot about this demographic. The age range for the women present went from early 20s to 70s, with the majority of the members being in their mid 30s to mid 40s. A large number stood up for the category 'Find someone who has traveled to at least 7 other countries' implying that the group is well travelled and educated. About half are 'Someone who has lived in Brant County for more than 20 years' while the other half are originally from outside of this community (as Paris has growing new subdivisions this seems very reasonable that there are a large number of newcomers). Many have young children. A handful are originally from outside of Ontario. My analysis of a typical Paris WI member: a working mother in her 30s, fairly well educated/travelled who stands a high probability of being new to the Paris area.

The President then called a break at this point for 15 minutes of socializing. Around the room I observed women enthusiastically gathered in small groups either standing or sitting, continuing their planning, or just having fun! The room buzzed with excited voices and laughter while they enjoyed beverages and snack food.

Sitting next to me was a lady who reminded me of many of my WI friends. She was neatly and conservatively dressed and wore her and her mother's WI badges on the traditional 'plaid' pinned to her clothing. I found out that she was in her 70s and had moved to Paris fairly recently from 'the North'. She has been a life-long WI member and I was very keen to talk with her about her experiences. She had her FWIO handbook with her as well as documents from her Sudbury area WI. In her booklet she sadly pointed out the names of branches that had closed. She also told me of a very successful method that the 'northern' branches had used to get people interested in WI. Once a year they put on a Saturday event, had light refreshments in a large hall, well publicized on TV, radio, and the internet with dynamic women speakers (she smiled and mentioned 'You know that MPs cannot charge a speaker's fee...').

These events were well attended and always got new members. I learned later that this was similar to the way that the Paris WI had been formed, by two ladies who did the planning, held an event that was well publicized and were wildly successful. My Northern friend also pointed out her hand-altered words to the WI Ode and the Mary Stewart Collect that had been used in her former branch. All references to religious belief or gender had been removed to make them more all-inclusive. When I mentioned that some more traditional WI members might object to making changes, she stated firmly that the times required change and that we had to move on. I think that she will fit in very well with this WI branch. As I told her 'I close my eyes and listen to you, and I cannot tell how old you really are.' Young-minded even with being in her 70s!

The President then turned our attention to papers that had been distributed, printed with the words to the 'WI Ode'. We were told about it being a tradition that was used at many other branches and that it was to be sung to the tune of 'Old Lange Syne'. Everyone tried their best at the words, although someone did ask "What's a weal?" Everyone was to consider whether or not to adopt the Ode as part of their regular meetings. My northern friend did speak up in support of this. She said that, throughout the world in the ACWW countries (WIs are members also), the one thing that we had in common was that almost everyone spoke/sang the WI Ode. It gives a feeling of bonds and kinship with groups of women worldwide. Her comments seemed well received, and it will be interesting to see if this group of Progressive WI members adopt this tradition.

I still cannot believe that all of the above was accomplished in less than 2 hours. I was exhausted from trying to keep up with all the new information! At this point, the meeting wrapped up, with volunteers rushing forward to clean up the room, put away the tables and chairs and help the President carry out the huge pile of donations to the local food bank. But hang on, my evening was not over yet. Someone suggested that we meet at a local pub for more socializing.

That is how I ended up at Cobblestones a cozy pub in an old building just across the street from my hotel. There were 8 members present. We ordered rounds of half-price appetizers which were generously shared. The conversation turned to personal items as happens with women who relax and truly feel comfortable with one another. We talked of loss of loved ones. Spirituality. Children.

Husbands. Planned fun things to do together. One young mother had hired a babysitter for her children so that she could attend the meeting. It felt like I had known these special women for more than a few hours. They felt like...friends. Isn't this the thing that keeps WI members coming back each month? One newcomer to Paris said how nice it was to run into other members when she was out running errands. It made her feel part of the community. An hour and a half later, Michelle and Sue walked me to the corner in the cold and windy dark where we parted with good wishes and invitations for me to visit them again.

ANALYSIS

Well, I feel that I now know a little more about the Paris WI secrets of success. Could it be used as a model to help revitalize the FWIO? I feel that it is an experiment that should be accelerated.

On that note, these are the recommendations that I would make to apply what I think of as the 'Paris model':

- **Have evening meetings.** Paris' started at 7 pm, which let the members get home from their jobs, pick up children, get supper and then get to the meeting. Weekends are usually very busy for modern young families, so the Thursday evening timeslot seems to work for many of them.
- **Use the meeting time effectively.** Cut out/cut down on the rituals. Younger women were raised and schooled in a different manner than previous generations. They are also time- stressed, so things have to be kept moving along quickly.
- **Make use of social media.** It is the natural milieu of younger women. You will reach them for membership. They will use it to keep in touch with one another, sharing information, planning, etc. All members should make an effort to master this new technology. It is as important a communications tool as reading. Think how WI women of 100 years ago took to the telephone!
- **Reach beyond our rural areas for new members.** Realize that the number of rural women in Ontario is shrinking as farmland is bought up by large corporations. Most of us now live in towns and cities. It is from this latter group that we have the best chance of drawing new younger members. It does not mean that the FWIO abandons farming issues. It is merely a fact of numbers to allow the organization to continue into the future.

The above may be too much change for many traditional branches to adopt. Therefore, it would be better that the local 'mother' branch create a secondary 'daughter' branch that could follow the Paris model and continue onward. If each branch that currently meets in the daytime could find some members to take on this effort and plan, publicize and nurture the new daughter branch through its first steps then the future of the FWIO would be ensured, and the good work that we have done will continue well beyond our lifetimes.

Great changes would be required, and we don't really like to change (me included). But sometimes you require extraordinary effort to have good things happen. Good things have certainly happened in the lovely cobblestone town of Paris, Ontario.

Respectfully, *Jennie*

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



After a beautiful sunny, even warm October and early November days, today I am looking out at a skiff of snow on the hills and a cool/cold northerly wind is blowing. Seeing the snow makes me accept that more will no doubt come, and with Christmas fast approaching that is to be expected. I know that some of you have already made your fruit cakes, and some of you have the ingredients ready to be used. It is that time of the year when traditions in our families are there and our lives are even busier than normal so that we can make all the preparations for our Christmas celebrations with friends and families. And I know that you will not forget those who are in need. There are so many who need our thoughtfulness, caring and generosity. I don't need to list the needs; you are very familiar with them. We speak about the peace, love, hope and joy of Christmas, and its true meaning, but we also know there are far too many in our country and the world who find this out of their reach.

When I thought about Christmas from my corner I thought about something I have done at Christmas for more than eighty years, - listen to our sovereigns Christmas message. At first it was the voice of King George VI on the static riddled radio, followed by his daughter Queen Elizabeth II, who for sixty-nine years brought her Christmas message to us on the radio, and then with advances in technology seeing and hearing her on our televisions. Those memories led me to a little book which was published on the occasion of the late Queen's ninetieth birthday. The book is entitled "The Servant Queen and the King she serves", and was given to me, by a friend for my ninetieth birthday! The Foreword is written by Her Majesty, and the book tells of her strong faith and how this gave her the strength to carry out her responsibilities. The book also gives excerpts from some of her Christmas messages where she always speaks of the true meaning of Christmas to her and reminding her listeners that regardless of their faith or no faith, the need for these values throughout our world.

Caring for our neighbours is a recurring theme in the Queen's Christmas broadcasts. Time and again over the years she reminded her listeners of looking out for those around us. In her 1975 message she said "We are all different, but each one of us has our best to offer. The responsibility for the way we live life with all its challenges, sadness and joy is ours alone. If we do this well, it will also be good for our neighbours. If you throw a pebble into a pool, the ripple goes on

spreading outwards. A big stone can cause waves, but even the smallest pebble changes the whole pattern of the water. Our daily actions are like those ripples, each one can make a difference, even the smallest. It does therefore matter what each individual does each day. Kindness, sympathy, resolution, and courteous behavior are infectious. And the combined effort can be enormous. We may feel powerless alone, but the combined efforts of individuals can defeat the evils of our time. Together they can create a stable, free and considerate society.”

This has just been a few of our late much loved Queen’s words of wisdom, and words to think about as we busily try to keep all our Christmas traditions. May the true meaning of Christmas, - peace, love, joy and hope be yours.

One week later we will be celebrating the arrival of 2023. Her Majesty reminds the readers of the little book about the words her Father spoke in his radio broadcast in 1939 and which has been used at the beginning of a new year for decades, and which I feel very meaningful. I said to the man who stood at the Gate of the Year “Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown” and he replied “Go out into the darkness, and put your hand into the hand of God, That shall be to you better than light, and safer than a known way.

Warm wishes to you and your family for a Merry Christmas and a happy, healthy and safe New Year, Ellen

FWIC WI Canada and YouTube

Did you know FWIC WI Canada has its own channel which you will find under the following logo:



Check out what’s new:

Social Media Workshop from Oct 25

Remembrance Event Nov 10

Membership Rally Nov 16

Leadership Modules

In January 2022 we began the WI Leadership Modules with the hope that we could support women as leaders in WI across Canada, and that dream came true. Six modules were presented and in the fall of 2022 we postponed the modules until January 2023. In order to complete the series, we propose the final three modules will be presented as listed below...

Wednesday January 4th, 2023

Goal Setting & Planning II

Wednesday January 18th, 2023 Communication Strategies

Wednesday February 1st, 2023 Leadership and Your Leadership Style/Identity

This message will be circulated to each participant, but we wish to share the message with all, in case we miss anyone. The thought is that a cold winter's night might be a great time to complete these events, so we can move forward with other initiatives. Please do not hesitate to contact me with your feedback... Angela Scott angela.scott@bellaliant.net

Cross Canada Book Club-

Next Club night 7 pm Eastern Time - January 19th- Growing Strong Girls, author Lindsay Sealey
fwicacrosscanadabookclub@fwic.ca I look forward to hearing from you – Elizabeth Young.

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