

WI Connections

Monthly Newsletter of the
Federated Women's Institutes of Canada



Margaret's Message...

Submitted by President, Margaret Byl

Another year has come and gone, and here we are again facing the toils and tribulations of the Covid 19 Pandemic and its variants. Let us count our blessings and move forward putting into action our better impulses, straight forward and unafraid. One of our blessings is the vaccinations that are accessible to all Canadians ages 5 and older and booster shots which are now available. Although the gathering sizes had been limited to 10 people, we could at least meet face to face with our loved ones. Perhaps, if we all follow the recommendations from Health Canada – get vaccinated if you are able, wear masks, social distance and follow general hygiene practices, the New Year will be the harbinger of good tidings.



As we turn the page of the calendar and usher in the New Year, we commemorate the 125th Anniversary of

the Women's Institutes movement. Plans are underway by the Provincial WIs to celebrate this momentous occasion from coast to coast to coast. A challenge has been put out to have each Province have 125 new members in 2022. Let's help the environment by each Province (their branches, districts, or areas) planting 125 trees of any variety. February 19th is WI Day. Let's all do our best to shout it from the roof tops! 125 Years is an amazing feat! I would like to have an estimated amount of donations made to charitable causes in the last year from each province submitted by the end of January. Together, we have made a difference and will continue to do so. Let's let the rest of Canada know how much our volunteer members have raised. Be proud, pat yourselves on the back. Even through the pandemic, WIs across Canada have done what they always do, raised awareness, raised funds, and raised hope for those in need.

January 10 is the FWIC/WI Canada Board Meeting. We welcome Linda Zelem from Ontario to the FWIC Board and congratulate the new FWIO President, Michelle Phillippi. Many thanks to the retiring FWIO President and FWIC Board Director, Mary Shortt, for her work on the FWIC Board. Mary will continue as a member of the FWIC/WI Canada communications committee member. If you have any questions or concerns for the FWIC Canada Board, please direct them to your provincial representative ahead of the Board Meeting for consideration on the agenda.

January 24 is International Day of Education. Have you looked at the ACWW website lately? Adelaide Hunter Hoodless said "Educate a boy and you educate a man but educate a girl and you educate a family". Adelaide was a woman ahead of her time, she advocated for food safety and food security and yet 125 years later we need to renew the call for food security.

January 26th is Bell Talk Day in support of Mental Health Awareness. Covid 19 has made it difficult for everyone, including young people that require mental health support. Are the wait times for counselling in your province acceptable? Share your smile, it may just make a difference in someone's life.

I wish you good health and many blessings in the New Year. Stay safe, wear a mask and be well.

I leave you with this quote from an American Poet,

*"I've learned that people will forget what you said,
people will forget what you did,
but people will never forget how you made them feel"* - Dr. Maya Angelou



Are you a WI member that is interested in the national level of WI?

The Board is seeking additional committee members for their two committees –

Outreach and **Communications**. All meetings are held virtually.

For more information email president-elect@fwic.ca.

Adelaide Hunter Hoodless Homestead



submitted by Margaret Byl, President FWIC

December was a busy time of the year at the Homestead. Emily and Roxana, our Archival Assistants (hired through a Young Canada Works grant), have been busy in the collections room and thanks to Mara Benjamin at the Erland Lee Museum Home and a donation of excess shelving and quilt rods, were able to re-arrange the collections room and to continue cataloguing and photographing the artefacts for inputting into Past Perfect, our museum collections program.

Emily and Roxana also did a fantastic job planning and preparing for a “Victorian Christmas” at the Adelaide Hunter Hoodless Homestead with parlour games, Christmas stories, Victorian Christmas food sampling, crafts and gingerbread cookie decorating stations (all following Covid 19 protocols). The event was enjoyed by all. Special thanks to our volunteers, we could not have done this



without you, and of course a warm welcome to all the attendees. It was a perfect day, with snow covered grounds. The Victorian Christmas event closed with the drawing of 3 prizes: a bottle wine and 2 drawings of 3 mini bottles from the Wayne Gretzky winery in Niagara on the Lake, courtesy of Rosemary Evangelista. Entry Ballots were filled out by attendees at the Homestead beginning at the Premiere of the 2 new Exhibits in November 2021.

Don't forget to become a Friend of Addie. Come visit our Gift Shop and book a tour in person or visit us online via our virtual tour. For more information contact info@adelaidehoodless.ca

The museum and FWIC/WI Canada Office will be closed from December 23rd to January 12, 2022. During the Holiday Closure, we are happy to announce that Staff from the County of Brant will be helping us with the kitchen changes that are necessary to bring Addie's Kitchen closer for certification by the County of Brant Health Department. We are so grateful to the County of Brant for all that they are doing to put us on the path of stability for the Adelaide Hunter Hoodless Homestead.

To Mayor David Bailey, County of Brant Councillors and Staff, the Government of Canada and to all that have volunteered their time or given a donation no matter how large or small, we thank you. On behalf of the FWIC/WI Canada Board and Staff at Addie's Homestead, we wish that you may find peace, joy, health, and happiness in the New Year.

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.



I am writing this the day before the shortest day of the years, and the longest night of the year. And it will be the first day of winter. In a few days when you read this you may, if you watch carefully, find that the day is just a minute or two longer. That reminds me that if Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

We have started a new book named 2022, - 365 blank pages. Only time will tell what will fill in those blanks. We look back on the 2021 pages and our hearts go out to those who have had to face fires, floods, drought, and most recently the potato farms on PEI facing trade restrictions and having to deal with the loss of thousands of bushels of potatoes, and we all have had to continue to carry on with Covid. When we hoped an end was in sight we are faced with a surge in cases of the Omicron variant as we begin our 2022 book. Will we ever reach the new normal? There are days that it is difficult to feel very optimistic, but we have to have faith and hope that there is a brighter future in store.

I would be less than honest if I didn't acknowledge that there weren't a good many times that I wonder how long will Women's Institutes continue to be part of our lives. For 125 years they have played an important role in the lives of thousands of women and their communities. Our FWIC is to be congratulated on the effort they are making in promoting the modules in Leadership that are taking place. They are coming up with new ideas and new ways for the provinces to attract new members and maintaining the interest of those who already belong. Our provincial units are also making efforts to show that there is still a place for an organization such as the Women's Institutes in the world of today. I think that for many of us the past two years have shown how important the friendship, neighbourliness, sociability, and community involvement are in the lives of our members.

Today it made me think about the Emperor Penguins, "They symbolize the magic of family and community. Every March, after most other living creatures have left the ice cold Antarctica, Emperor Penguins by the thousands burst from the northern waters and begin a long, treacherous journey, single-file across the barren ice-covered lands with the united mission of creating new life. As individuals they would not survive,- together they succeed."

Good Luck as you record your dreams, your successes and perhaps even some failures on the pages of 2022. May it be a safe healthy and happy record.



A Year in the Life of Women's Institutes of Ontario

submitted by Mary Shortt, Past-President, WI Ontario

Fall reminds me that change can be beautiful. This past year has certainly been one of change and for many it may not have been so beautiful, but I hope that it will be looked back on as generating positive outcomes for our future. We all wish we could get together physically and have wonderful conversations, sharing memories and plans for the future but we will remain positive in spirit and keep each other in our hearts and minds. **We are stronger together.**

October has been especially busy month and 12 of the 13 Areas held their annual meetings, most by Zoom, some having had none last year. The Area Executives have been making the extra effort to connect to the membership and has proven how resilient the WI members are. Most meetings had some entertainment and executive positions were filled.

The Regional Board Directors continued to represent the interests of the membership in each Region, attending monthly Board zoom meetings, serving on standard Committees, ad hoc committees and taking the lead on specific projects.

Our Administrative Manager, Andrea; Office Assistant, Kate; and Museum Curator, Mara have always been available to assist and answer questions. These women are the team that has held our organization together throughout the pandemic and have always acted in the best interest of Women's Institute and the members. Our monthly Eblast has kept members updated and was shared with members who don't have access. The Membership committee has also sent out a monthly newsletter which brought encouragement and ideas on building our membership. We have a new webpage, www.fwio.on.ca, and it will be kept updated to offer news, information and support to our members.

Strategic Plan Goals 2020-2023: Membership building, financial stability, streamlining organizational structure, advance advocacy, increase community involvement, sustainability of the Erland Lee Museum

The Coordinators for Advocacy, Digitizing, Education, FWIC, International, Membership, and Tweedsmuir are elected positions and have voting power at the Provincial AGM for electing the new Board and officers. We are very thankful for all the work these members do to inspire the membership.

We held a Candidates night on November 18th via Zoom – of course. This gave the voting delegates and members an opportunity to get to know the nominees for vacant positions and discuss with their Area on the choice that is best for WI before the ballot takes place at the AGM in December.

Membership is our highest priority as our main source of income and as the numbers continue to drop the greatest effort ever is being made to appeal to new members. This means understanding who might be interested in joining an organization that was established 125 years ago and what we could offer that would encourage participation. We have hired RM Marketing for professional marketing and membership growth assistance. They will be investigating and assessing our organization to give professional advice on how best to go into the future.

The Erland Lee Museum, the site of the beginning of WI and where the first constitution was written, reopened with restrictions and during the lockdown the grounds have been open with outdoor tours and brochures prepared by Mara. [Erland Lee \(Museum\) Home - FWIO | Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario](#)

The Erland Lee Museum Committee, has continued to meet and discuss ways to promote and sustain the museum. **But make no mistake.** This National Historic Museum will always need support from the members to remain part of WI. Without sufficient, continued support the property would have to be sold and the reminder of WI's impact on the world today would be lost.

Mara, our Museum Curator has created many on-line lectures and tours telling the story of how WI began, participated in numerous virtual events with other museums and the local municipality and found useful grants and covid support to also sustain the Museum.

Now we are looking forward.

Next year will be the 125th anniversary of the beginning of WI and 50 years since the Lee home was purchased and became the Erland Lee Museum Home. Hopefully we will be able to celebrate in all our communities and use this milestone to remind your neighbours that WI is alive and well and a wonderful organization to belong to.

In celebration of WI's 125th Anniversary in 2022, WI Ontario is hosting **two** (2) Province Wide – Year Long Events.



Home and Country Rose Quilt Challenges.

With permission from Marilyn Edmonds of Brighton we will be using the Home and Country Rose Quilt pattern she designed in 2005.

Challenge 1 – Quilt Block Challenge

Challenge 2 – Creative Block Challenge.

These blocks will be judged by a Certified Quilt Judge on February 19, 2022

WISH – WI Scavenger Hunt

The Theme of the WISH event is ‘JUST HAVE FUN’ because this event is meant to be fun as we celebrate together in Ontario. Friendly competition among the Branch Teams will make this a fun, participatory event.

**As we wrap up this year
we wish all our WI sisters across Canada
Peace, Joy, Love, Happiness and Health in 2022.**

.....



*THE GLOBAL GOALS
For Sustainable Development
RURAL WOMEN IN ACTION*

Submitted by Doreen Wall, PEI WI

HISTORY: [The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which are an urgent call for action by all countries – developed and developing -in a global partnership. They recognize that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests.

Ending poverty around the world is the first goal. Millions of people lack the basic resources to enjoy a decent life. Things like food, shelter, clothing, healthcare, and education. These things are necessary to fully participate in society. The main people who are affected by these are women and children.

Since 2015 there has been a further set back by COVID-19 pandemic, with the global rate of extreme poverty rising in 2020 for the first time in 20 years. The triple threat of COVID-19, conflict and climate change makes the global goal of



ending poverty by 2030 unachievable unless immediate and substantial policy actions are taken by all countries. Four billion people worldwide are still without any social protection, most of whom are poor and vulnerable again women and girls. The pandemic has severely affected the informal economy, where the majority of working poor are employed. It has also had an impact on the livelihoods of young and female workers who are already likely to be living in poverty. Young people were twice as likely as adults to be among the working poor.

Governments are giving band aid solutions by more than 1600 short-term social protection measures in response to the COVID 19 crisis. At the last Climate change conference just over, many of the issues were watered down by the end and two countries were not even there. The youth of our world are stepping up and speaking out. Governments with data for the period 2015-2018 only spent between 15 and 20 per cent of total government money on education. Issues need to be dealt with and countries need to step up to the plate.

I will try and have one of these each newsletter but if you are curious go to www.sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg it will give you more information and stats. Very interesting reading.

.....

Saskatchewan Women's Institute

"Happy New Year", submitted by Karen Gerwing

Time to start all our New Year's resolutions with good intentions. Stay healthy and have a positive outlook on life, no matter what it throws at you. Celebrate what you can still do, and don't dwell on what you can't do.

I am so happy that 2022 will be the celebration year of 125 years since the first WI branch was established at Stoney Creek, Ontario.

Unfortunately it may be the last year of the Saskatchewan Women's Institute organization. There were only 12 members in attendance at the annual meeting held in Foam Lake on Monday, October 18 last year. The total membership has dwindled to 27 and it was felt that the organization is no longer viable to continue. A motion was made to send out a mail in ballot to vote on a decision to disband. There will also be included in the mail out suggestions of where to donate the remaining funds in our account. I will be hosting the 2022 AGM in Lake Lenore on Monday, June 13, 2022.



SWI AGM in Foam Lake hosted by Briar Mound WI branch on October 18, 2021

I volunteered to take on the position of President after the passing of Virginia Kreklevich, having been a member since 1985 and on the provincial board since 2006. There was a motion to disband back in 2010 just before the 100th Anniversary of SWI, which was defeated. At the time, President-Elect Marie Kenny encouraged the members to continue as her theme for the 2012 Triennial in Sidney, BC was “Coast to Coast - WI Alive and Well”.

SWI did continue and the annual quilt raffle began to raise money for the Saskatchewan Children’s Hospital. The goal of raising \$10,000 was achieved and is acknowledged on the donor’s board at the hospital. Virginia Kreklevich was President of SWI in 2002-2005, followed by a term on FWIC. She took on the position of President again in 2018. It was Virginia’s wish that we continue with SWI for the members that we still had. We did that and now with her gone the remaining 27 members have to decide what to do now.

It seems like a sad time but there are so many things to look back on and celebrate. The organization continued for much longer than most people anticipated even though we lost all funding and the office at the University, there were still dedicated volunteers to keep going.

The future of Women’s Institutes across Canada is uncertain but maybe the other provinces can look to Saskatchewan and learn that you can keep going despite the odds but unless you look for ways to change and move forward by getting new members, new ideas and new projects, that eventually you run out of the existing members until you don’t have enough people left to continue. There are many reasons that SWI was unable to change and move forward but I am hopeful that WI will continue in Canada and through ACWW. There still is a need for women to get together, to learn and support one another and their communities.



Happy New Year! President Elect Lynn MacLean

Here's to a bright New Year and a fond farewell to the old; here's to the things that are yet to come, and to the memories that we hold."

We happily say goodbye to 2021 and look to 2022 for new opportunities and in particular the celebration of the 125th anniversary of the founding of Women's Institutes. Across those many years members have handed down their memories and stories on what WI meant to them and to their communities. Those memories included helping women and their families, supporting their local schools from providing cod liver oil capsules in the past to now supporting breakfast programs, advocating for change through resolutions, as well as supporting the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada and the Associated Country Women of the World. This is a history of which to be proud.



There is no question our organization has helped to develop our rural communities and provided leadership training to many women over the last 125 years. At the recent Round Table on Membership, members acknowledged the past but understood that today's new members have different perspectives and desires. As an organization we ought to review our past practices and processes and invite our members to share their ideas and together create a vision for WI that will carry our organization forward.

So, my New Year's wish would be to hear from members, new and seasoned, and together find ways to grow WI across Canada and for more of the WI members to understand the value of the national level.

Wishing you a happy, healthy New Year." Lynn MacLean, FWIC President-Elect



Meet ~ Ruth Veiner, submitted by Sharon Miller



Ruth Veiner is a member of the Landry Women’s Institute. Newly married at age 17 she joined the group with her new mother –in – law who was a Charter Member. now, 65 years later she is a Life Member of that group. She attributes the WI with teaching her how to be a leader; a contributing group member; and advocate and mentor for others....all done through modeling; mentorship and encouragement. It equipped her with the skills and abilities to be a member of such groups as National Farmer’s Union, 4 H and BC Land Commission where she took on various roles such as chairmanship of national conventions and the writer and presenter of briefs.



Her view is not that she had inherited the land from her parents; but that she had borrowed the land and had the stewardship of it for later generations.

Beyond the learning gained, she has highly valued the relationships that have endured throughout the years. Their support throughout the times of loneliness and loss are beyond compare. During the Christmas/holiday season when so many people are enjoying and valuing friends and family so too are there people suffering loneliness and loss of loved ones who cannot share that season again. At times like this one needs friends who are there; friends who feel your need; friends who will share. Ruth has found that those friends are relationships developed with WI members because WI members reach out to those in need of support.....fellow farmers who know and feel the same pressures; fellow women who understand and can talk freely and listen with empathy. Ruth has a friend in Scotland met through WI. They have met personally visited each others homes. They laugh together and cry together.

Friends like that are 'golden'.

Ruth is a positive impact on her community. As time progressed she attended college and acquired the courses necessary to become a teacher of children with special needs and sat on various Boards such as Lakeview Credit Union and Regional District Agricultural Advisory Committee. She helped to instigate the BC Association of Child Care Services which provided support for children in need. She is a friend to others in her apartment block, was a loving wife and is a mother, grandmother and great grandmother and a mentor to others who work with her and share her interests. Her involvement over time has always been tied to children and land. She contributes the WI with development of the character traits which have carried her throughout her life.

.....



A Note from Marie - Marie Kenny; ACWW UN Committee Chairman

Hello Everyone,

As another year comes to an end and we look to 2022 with renewed hope and vision of a healthier world, I would like to give you a brief update on the Advocacy work of ACWW. ACWW is moving forward stronger and in a more visible position on the global platform than it has been in quite some time.

The fact is that the Covid pandemic with its massive restrictions has not slowed

down the advocacy work of ACWW, but instead has clearly highlighted the vitally important and significant role that we have as we must raise the awareness of how all aspects of the lives of women both rural women and non-rural have been drastically affected.

ACWW continues to raise the awareness of how human rights injustice and neglect, climate change and natural disasters continue to negatively affect the lives women and their families everywhere. We are working at continuing to keep those and other issues in the forefront of conversations with global and political leaders seeking change and knowing real change can be achieved when we are working together.

In our partnership with UNESCO we have achieved a stronger leadership role, and most recently ACWW's Advocacy Director Nick Newland organised and chaired the 12th International Forum for NGO's intitled "Achieving Global Citizenship". This two-day event had incredible speakers including former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (the man responsible for the creation and adoption of the SDG's Sustainable Development Goals) as well as speakers from 13 countries including the Assistant Director General of UNESCO for Education and Deputy Director General of UNESCO.

On the ACWW website you can view updated Policy, Statements and Regional Surveys and I encourage you to engage whenever and wherever possible. The Advocacy Impact Report is there as well as the World President's Newsletter. If you do not receive the Country Woman Magazine all copies are also on the website for your reading leisure.

Please consider joining the ACWW Facebook and participate in conversation there.

Pennies for Friendship is the ACWW empowerment fund, donations there keep the organization going and it is important that we continue to donate as well as give others the opportunity to engage by donating to the work and/or becoming a member.

In **March 2022**, ACWW once again will be taking part in **CSW** (Commission on the Status of Women) and we are now in the process of securing side events and more information will be coming forthright in the New Year.

United Nations Commission on the Status of Women

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is the principal global intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. The CSW is instrumental in promoting women's rights, documenting the reality of women's lives throughout the world, and shaping global standards on gender equality and the empowerment of women. During the Commission's annual two-week session, representatives of UN Member States, civil society organizations and UN entities gather at UN Headquarters in New York. They discuss progress and gaps in the implementation of the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the key global policy document on gender equality, and the 23rd special session of the General Assembly held in 2000 (Beijing+5), as well as emerging

issues that affect gender equality and the empowerment of women. Member States agree on further actions to accelerate progress and promote women's enjoyment of their rights in political, economic, and social fields. The outcomes and recommendations of each session are forwarded to ECOSOC for follow-up.

CSW Themes for March 14-25, 2022

Priority Theme: Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programmes;

Review Theme: Women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work ([agreed conclusions](#) of the sixty-first session).

All event briefs have had to be submitted to UN Women for approval; at this stage dates are confirmed and times allocated – we are not able to decide exact timings until we have completed the submission process. We will let you know as this will be a hybrid event and I am hoping as many as possible will take advantage of this opportunity to be part of this global event.

A blessed, stay safe and healthy New Year to you all as we continue to be Stronger Together.

.....

Leadership Modules start this coming week!

Leadership for the future of WI is essential. That is why the Communications Committee wanted to support the Leadership Modules project, which we started to organize in January 2021. Now, we are ready to get started on Wednesday the 5th of January 2022.

As individuals...we are each leaders in WI, whether we hold an office or not. We are called to communicate with each other, and our families and communities. We work together for Home and Country. For 125 years WI has provided women with a chance to learn from each other and care for each other in a group as only women can do. The comfort and caring that a circle of friends and neighbours can provide is so important to the vitality of communities all over the world.

The Five Leadership Principles researched and documented by Kouzes and Posner each speak to the significance of relationships in leadership dynamics. In their words...the principles include:

Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, Encourage the Heart.



This makes me think of Margaret Byl's quote in her column this month. We all remember how people make us feel, and it will be great to delve into these topics and consider leadership and what it feels like to be in a leadership role as well as being led. Plan now to register if you have not already done so. Zoom coordinates will be sent to the registered participants. Inquire angela.scott@bellaliant.net



WI Canada FWIC

359 Blue Lake Road, P.O. Box 209

St. George, ON N0E 1N0

info@fwic.ca 519.448.3873

Margaret Byl, President

Lynn MacLean, President Elect

Colleen Hooper, BC

Linda Mason, AB Executive

Eleanor Lilley, NS

Karen Gerwing, SK

Denise Joss, MB

Mary Shortt, ON

Judy Page Jones QC

Angela Scott, NB

Doreen Wall, PEI

Elizabeth Young NL