

WI Connections

Monthly Newsletter of the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada



Margaret's Message

Margaret Byl, President

Dear Sisters in WI and guests,

Most of what you are reading is from my New President's Address given on July 6, 2021, but I wanted to make a few additions here.

The past 3 years have been interesting to say the least. I have learned a lot under the mentorship of President Joan, whom I admire greatly for her tenacity, level-headedness, and leadership ability. Joan, you have led with grace and skill, even in the most trying of times. Covid-19 has most definitely hampered your term as FWIC President. For a little lady, those are awfully big

shoes that I will endeavour to fill.

Thank you, Joan, I am honoured to call you, my friend. I was fortunate to be able to perform my first act as president by presenting Joan Holthe, on behalf of the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada with a Life Membership. Unfortunately, it was by virtual means. Life Membership is the highest honour that FWIC can confer. The original FWIC Life Membership Books are located in the National Archives in Ottawa.

It has been a great pleasure working with the FWIC/WI Canada board and staff. There have been many changes



along the way and each member of the board and staff has brought a unique set of skills with them. “Our Diversity is Our Strength”.

I also wish to thank my family and in particular, my husband for his support and patience for all of the trips to the Homestead; time spent in Zoom Meetings and on the computer. I have always said that he “is a keeper”. I am looking forward to working with the new board for the next triennial and wish to congratulate Lynn MacLean as our new President-elect and future President of FWIC/WI Canada. She brings with her many talents and I know that she will make a great president.

We will also have our challenges to overcome, and hopefully, Covid-19 will not be one of them. We need to remember those that have passed and to thank the many front line workers for their dauntless endeavours and community support in their fight against this horrific pandemic. I would like to thank all of our sisters in WI for the masks that were hand-made or money raised for PPEs or virtual meetings in support of Mental Health and Abuse Awareness while we were in shut-down. When I spoke to the meeting at the 21st National Convention in Winnipeg, I mentioned how I thought that Climate Change could be an issue and that we need to be mindful of the changes that could be coming. Let us keep the residents of Lytton BC in our thoughts and prayers. Lytton recorded a temperature increase of

50° F over their normal temperature for this time of year and the next day 90% of the town was lost to one of the 175 active fires that were reported in BC on Saturday, July 3, 2021.

From coast to coast to coast we are suffering the effects of climate change: Raising water levels, extreme weather, increased numbers of tornadoes in central Canada and the frequency of hurricanes and tropical storms that affect life in the east. A report issued in 2019 showed that Canada is warming at twice the global rate and that the North is warming at three times the global rate.

What can we do now to keep our planet safe for our children and grandchildren? There are many issues that our organization should be looking at from Modern Slavery, Human trafficking, Mental Health Awareness and more. What are the issues that you would like FWIC/WI Canada to focus on?

With such a variety of peoples, communities, and cultures, I know that we can make a difference. After all, “Our Diversity is Our Strength”.

What will our future look like? Please read the attached winning entry for the Community Tweedsmuir Triennial Competition. “What is Next for WI Canada” written by Chandra Smith from New Brunswick. As we contemplate our future, I will leave you with one of my favourite sayings from Henry Ford – “Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress’ working together is Success”.

Welcome Margaret!



What is Next for WI Canada

Submitted by Chandra Smith
Hillsborough WI, Hillsborough NB

Federated Women Institutes of Canada

Will always be the women's voice.

Looking toward the future

Giving reason to rejoice

Our motto stands the test of time.

For Home and Country and of Thee

We will not forget the importance,

Of being all that we can be.

We find our purpose for today,

In our families and community

Influencing those we love

Towards their potentiality

Many hands have made work lighter,

In all the deeds that have been done

Many deeds of kindness shown,

Are accomplished for everyone.

As we take time for all things,

We can be useful in effective ways.

Being mindful of what we have faced,

Helps us to get through our current days.

Learning is a regular exercise,

And always a good time spent.

To keep abreast of technology

Or to improve the environment

Continuing to be large in thought,

We can create an inclusive society.

Where we are conscious of others
And progressing toward inclusivity

No matter where we come from

We will find the time to give,

And rise to meet the challenge.

Showing our initiative.

Straight forward and unafraid

We are the women of our day.

We will commit to take a stand,

And create a better way.

Despite the era we live in

With racial issues and job equality

The work of moving women forward

Will be a top priority.

Projecting all that we know.

In interventions we partake

We can grasp the unknown

And have a contribution to make.

Women to come will find success,

As those in the past have led the way.

There is opportunity to achieve.

And contributions bring a better day.

So, what will WI become in Canada.

Not knowing what lies in store.

We continue to project into the future,

And shine from shore to shore.



Adelaide Hunter Hoodless Homestead

A National Historic Site

Submitted by Margaret Byl, President

This Triennial has seen many changes at the Homestead! In the early spring of 2019, the Homestead Committee members voted to disband the committee. The Homestead Committee Members were thanked for the tremendous job that they have done over the years.

We also said goodbye to a number of staff at the Homestead and as Covid-19 came along we had no choice but to shut down due to Provincial Health Restrictions.

The FWIC/WI Canada Board approved renovations to the Homestead and a fundraiser for “Addies Kitchen” was created. The project had 2 phases.

Phase I of the renovations included moving the office spaces, opening up a meeting/education room, completing a modern, certified kitchen and making the main floor washroom accessible. Those renovations were nearly completed in time for the 2019 AGM which was our first attempt at a live broadcast via zoom from the Homestead with all of the FWIC Board in attendance.

Phase 2 which was to be a stone hearth was put on hold. We had high hopes to make this an amazing and unique education and meeting place, then along came Covid-19!

Thanks to the Government of Canada and a New Horizons for Seniors Grant many programs were presented to the public and WI members, originally live and in person at the Homestead, but as Covid-19 came along, we had to adapt and our “Virtual Gatherings” were created allowing us to reach people from coast to coast to coast and “across the pond”. Thanks to a grant from the County of Brant and a very generous donation from Mr. Hollie Archer, the Homestead has received a fresh coat of paint. The roof and decks have been power washed, but unfortunately this has revealed that a new roof will be required in the very near future.

FWIC has received letters, phone calls, and emails expressing dismay over the decision to sell. WI members, the community, and Brant County stated they were unaware that the Homestead was struggling financially and expressed their willingness to help. The FWIC Board has listened to the concerns and agreed to take the Homestead off the market and continue to seek sustainable solutions.

FWIC has since received grants from Museum Assistant Program to help with the digital and conservation of museum artifacts and temporary funding from the Young Canada Works program to hire two museum assistants. The Young Canada Works program shares the costs with the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada and expires in March 2022. The FWIC Office and the Museum have been operating without management staff since December with the exception of Sally, our bookkeeper and Linda our Treasurer whom we wish to thank for helping to keep us on track and letting us know which invoices are in need of payment.

To the Government of Canada, the Government of Ontario, Brant County & Brant Tourism, the Homestead Committee Members, the St. George Business Association and to everyone that has given of their time, effort



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 one the eve of the 22nd National Convention of the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada. And a different Convention it will be. The FWIC Board has been working very hard to make sure that this event will be a success. Those of us who will be participating are very appreciative of their efforts.

It is also just four days since Canada Day 2021 and we are still living in pandemic times. Restrictions are being eased at different rates in different provinces, but things are as yet far from being as they used to be. Last year after Canada Day I wrote about how different, or nonexistent, Canada Day celebrations had been. I mentioned the concerns and sadness I was feeling about our Canada with the scars and blemishes we carried as a nation. But we were still talking about celebrating our nation's birthday. This year it has been quite different. It has been felt that we have nothing to celebrate. The scars and blemishes of the past are deeper. Just a few weeks ago we were reminded of that when the horror and grief of the unmarked graves of hundreds of indigenous children were made known.

Canada Day 2021 should not be a day of celebration but one of reflections, reflection on the past, as well as reflection on the future paths for our country. And then I remember the words of U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris, "one of the most important ingredients in a relationship of trust is that we speak truth. It matters what we say. What we mean. The value we put on our words – and what they mean to others."

I just watched the evening's TV News, and reports were that province of British Columbia is on fire. The devastation and loss are heartbreaking. And our thoughts and prayers go to all the residents of the province, particularly those living in or near the many communities in danger. And then our reflections of the cause of such disasters lead us to the fact that it is climate change, and then what are our responsibilities in helping to combat that?

It is the lazy hazy days of summer, but ideal days for reflecting on our individual responsibilities, and those of our combined voices in our Women's Institutes so we can once again celebrate what I believe is still a wonderful country to call home.





Project Maple Leaf



One of the speakers at the 22nd FWIC National Convention, was Kelly Tallon Franklin. Kelly is the Executive Director of *Courage for Freedom*, a Canadian-led organization which exists to educate, train, and certify front-line and community service providers to help victims of human trafficking and sexual exploitation.

During her passionate presentation, Kelly shared that human trafficking is a growing concern in Canada and human trafficking has increased by 43% since 2019. Victims come from across Canada and from all sizes of communities, including rural ones. Her group supports the victim survivors by using equine therapy and trauma informed and person centric-care approaches.

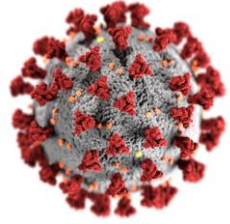
As well as working with survivors, Kelly and her team have learned that to have the message heard and actions taken by government, organizations who care about children and our country need to work together. Her request to those at the Convention was to support Project Maple Leaf. On July 30th on the steps of each provincial legislature representatives from Courage for Freedom will shine a light on the importance of eradicating human trafficking and sexual exploitation.

As individuals, we also can do our part by taking a picture of ourselves holding a sign (available from Courage for Freedom) that states “I want to eradicate the buying, selling of girls, boys and children in Canada” and post it on social media. The goal is to flood social media with this message on July 30th. To get involved contact www.courageforfreedom.org.
info@courageforfreedom.org



Life During COVID

Submitted by Karen Condon, Paris Ontario



I am a single mom of three kids and am used to being on the go 7 days a week with sports activities and 4-H. It certainly took some adjustment living life during COVID. Slowing down was a challenge at first but we managed to adapt, and I have been very fortunate to find so many positives. One of those things of course being part of an amazing WI group. Moving to a virtual platform allowed us to continue our meetings once a month. It was such a blessing to have something to look forward to. The love and support from other members have been amazing as well. These ladies have been my saving grace since I joined several years ago after my divorce and continue to be there on many different levels as we all find our own path through this journey.

Like so many others I began several projects at the beginning of COVID. Time spent scrap-booking the many photos of my children was a long overdue project. I am so pleased with the results. I was fortunate to be home and able to help my son with the completion of his grade 9 year. Both my jobs were on hold for quite some time. So, I enjoyed the spring and summer in a peaceful environment. As a 4-H leader along with several others we were able to find ways in a virtual format to offer club projects to our members. We had 19 clubs complete with over 100 members. Transitioning to a virtual year end awards banquet was a busy time for me. As we moved into the fall my son was back to school in the classroom and even back on the ice.

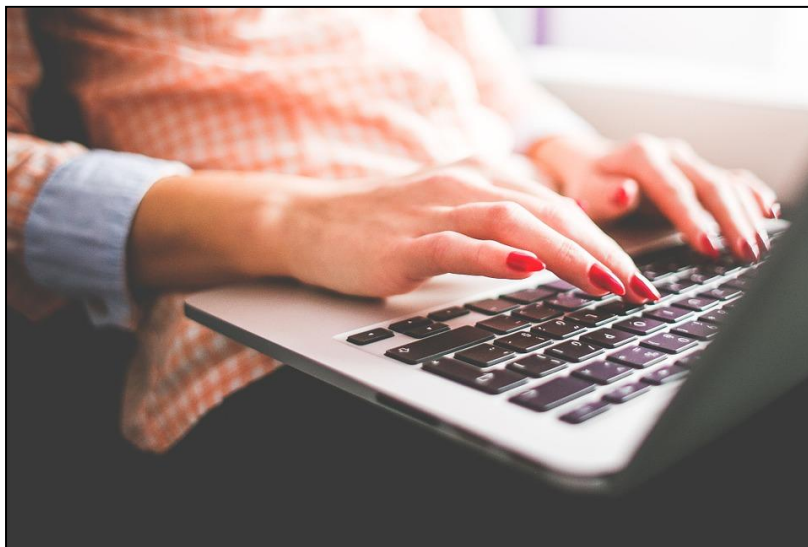
Some sort of normal almost. We did miss all the fall fairs and dairy shows, but we still managed to have an achievement day. The judge went from farm to farm and then tallied the votes. We were grateful for the small family gatherings outdoors and the opportunity to see friends safely. The winter seemed as busy as ever. I was back to work at one job, and we managed to have in person school until Christmas. Priorities and choices were then in front of us. We did choose to have a small family gathering but certainly missed those that were not able to be with us.

Being a single mom of 3 certainly was not without its challenges during COVID. As much as I was enjoying a much slower pace from all the activities, this presented new stress in our home. My oldest had been out on her own for a few months in the working world. Being in a customer service position it became much more than her already fragile mental health could handle. After a year off she is just now back to work at a new job which she seems to be enjoying so far. My middle child just celebrated her 19th birthday at college when COVID began. We were



given 24 hours-notice for her to pack her things and leave the residence she had called home. It was over a weekend, so she didn't even get a chance to say goodbye to all the friends she had made in her first year. Back at home she completed her courses online while babysitting a 10-year-old of an essential worker. When her courses were done, she found a fulltime job to keep her busy over the summer. With the news of classes being completely online for the fall she decided not to return to school for now. Online learning in a very socially oriented program just wasn't what she wanted. She has now settled into a job at Adidas and seems quite happy there. Being a teenage boy is not easy at the best of times, but my 15-year-old has definitely struggled a great deal over the last year. He did complete an online 4-H cookie club and was eventually able to go to a friend's farm to pick out his 4-H calf in the summer. So, we had those frequent visits to look forward to. We also made an effort weekly to go mini golfing, a new course each week. This summer we are hoping to do that again and add a different takeout restaurant each week as well. It is important to have something to look forward to. That has been his greatest struggle. The lack of routine and the never-ending unknown of what we can and can't do. There were definitely positive things throughout the year and hopefully he will be able to look back eventually and see those despite his negative feelings currently.

As we head toward the end of school online again, we are starting to see light at the end of the tunnel. For me it is hope of time with family and friends and the ability to find the balance of our busy lives and the peaceful times I enjoyed last summer.



Labour of Love During COVID-19

Submitted by Ruth Blenkhorn, Port Williams Women's Institute, NS

My younger sister, Deb, who first introduced me to WI passed away in 2013 while waiting for a liver transplant. Her husband had never cleared her sewing/craft room.

Last fall their son moved back from Ottawa to live with him while waiting for his house to be ready. Lewis decided it was time to clear the sewing room for an office space for James to work.



One day Lewis arrived at my door with a garbage bag of "stuff". He handed it to me and said I think Deb was making something, maybe you can use the material.

Something indeed was in the bag were quilt blocks, material, and patterns. One was a small table runner and I finished it and gave it to them for Christmas.

The second was quilt blocks which took a bit longer to put together. I finished the quilt top and a friend who does machine quilting quilted it and I put the binding on it.

The quilt is now back with the family and with James in his new home. Truly a labour of love, laughter, and tears.



Welcome Lynn

Lynn joined the Lyon's Brook WI in 1981 and has held executive positions both at the Branch and at the District levels. In 1997 she became the President of the Women's Institutes of Nova Scotia and in 2003 went on to become the FWIC Executive Officer for Nova Scotia. After learning about a vacancy on the ACWW Committees in 2007 Lynn volunteered and served for twelve years on two committees, first on Publicity and Publications (now C&M)



and then on the Triennial Conference Committee which planned the World Conferences for 2016 and 2019. Lynn returned to the FWIC Board in September of 2019 following the passing of Nova Scotia's Provincial Representative Sheila Richards.

Professionally, Lynn's career was in the field of education. Beginning as a high school teacher, she quickly moved into administration as a high school principal, and then as a Family of Schools Supervisor; as well as serving on the senior management team of the regional school board. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Dalhousie University, an Associate Degree from Nova Scotia Teachers College, and a Master in Education (Administration) from Saint Mary's University.

Over the years, Lynn has also served with various organizations including 4-H, Ministry and Personnel, the Kings Mutual Insurance Company, Northumberland Regional Educational Society, and the local School Advisory Council. Lynn and her husband, Jimmie, live in northeastern Nova Scotia and have two daughters and two grandsons.



PEI WI Highlights New Scholarships submitted by Ellen MacPhail

This month's column highlights the latest scholarships with the PEI Women's Institute. In over a century of Women's Institute on PEI, their boards and some branches have developed an array of scholarships for the benefit of residents.

The PEI Women's Institute has developed two additional scholarships in honour of Prince Edward Island's Famous Five from sales of the recently published recount of Prince Edward Island's Famous Five. Published by the Interministerial Women's Secretariat, the book tells the story of how five women made political history, holding five of the most influential positions of government in the province in 1993. Copies of the book are still available by contacting the WI office at 40 Enman Crescent in Charlottetown. These scholarships highlight both the Women's Institute's roots in agriculture, and the leadership and team effort displayed in health care during COVID-19 in Prince Edward Island.

With proceeds from the PEI Famous Five book, the Prince Edward Island Women's Institute is offering two, one time only scholarships with the hopes of adding more with additional book sales. A scholarship of \$1,000 will be offered to a student entering a career in health in an academic program at a college or university. A second scholarship also valued at \$1,000 will be offered to a student entering a career in agriculture in an academic program in a college or university. The theme of these scholarships are to honour the team effort under the efforts of Dr. Morrison and Marion Dowling as they led residents through the pandemic on PEI, as well as highlight the agriculture roots of WI and the province of Prince Edward Island.

To be considered for an academic scholarship, all applicants must submit a completed application form to the PEI Women's Institute. Applications can be completed and submitted along with supporting documents by mail, online or dropped off at the office at 40 Enman Crescent in Charlottetown by September 30. Along with the application form, the applicant must provide transcripts from their current or most recently attended high school, college, or university, resume, two references, and a short essay. The essay can be up to three pages and must outline why they are choosing their career and what factors in their life influenced the choice they made. Applications must include the name of the program they are entering and the institution in which they will be studying. Proof of acceptance is also required for the program of study from the educational institution. Successful applicants will be notified by the WI Office of the Prince Edward Island Women's Institute in early fall of 2021.

Another deadline is also slated for September 30. The Helen Herring Scholarship of \$500 will be awarded to a student from Prince Edward Island, who by September of the current year, is enrolled in their third year of a university program leading to a degree in Foods & Nutrition/Dietetics, Family Science/Studies, Human Ecology, or a related discipline. The course of study should include a broad spectrum of courses relating to areas of knowledge and skills necessary for the welfare of families in their homes and communities. Helen Herring played an integral role on PEI in the development of WI on PEI.



Welcome to the
virtual tour of the
Adelaide Hunter
Hoodless
Homestead
www.fwic.ca



President Margaret and her team have done it!

The Homestead is now available online for a virtual tour. Visit the website www.fwic.ca and click on the 'tour' button in the middle of the page and begin your virtual tour.

New Member Idea!

The next time you invite someone new to join your monthly meeting, be sure to offer to pick them up and bring them with you. No one likes coming into a strange place alone, and it's such a welcoming touch. Give it a try!





Wasn't that a party!

Hillsborough WI, Hillsborough NB 19 members

See you next month!



Many thanks to everyone for your submissions this month. Please plan to send something for our August issue now. The 'gentle' deadline is August 5th, 2021. We love to see pictures and hear all about current events in your WI Branches, Districts, Areas and Provinces.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

WI Canada FWIC

- 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

.....
 359 Blue Lake Road, P.O. Box 209
 St. George, ON N0E 1N0
 info@fwic.ca 519.448.3873

