

March 2025

Monthly Newsletter for Federated Women's Institutes of Canada

WI Connections



International Women's Day-March 8th

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Together We Rise...
FOR HOME & COUNTRY

Mindful Consumption



FWIC National Project



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From the President's desk...

Well, here we are heading into March, and most of us would say good riddance to February with its multiple storms and bone-chilling temperatures. We will agree that the sun shining on the glistening snow looks lovely, but the ice underfoot is not so enjoyable. On a positive note, March will bring us that much closer to spring and more days of sunshine.

On March 8, we will celebrate International Women's Day. This year's theme is **Accelerate Action**. According to the World Economic Forum, at the current rate of progress, it will take until 2158 to achieve full gender parity. Focusing on the need to Accelerate Action, International Women's Day will emphasize the importance of taking swift and decisive steps to achieve gender equality. It calls for increased momentum and urgency in addressing the systemic barriers and biases that women face, both in personal and professional spheres.

The International Women's Day website states that Accelerate Action is a worldwide call to acknowledge strategies, resources, and activities that positively impact women's advancement and to support and elevate their implementation.

We are all aware that there remain significant barriers to gender equality, yet with the right action and support, positive progress can be made for women everywhere. Think about our predecessors, like Emily Murphy, the first FWIC president, and the changes she and others achieved during their lifetime.

What steps can we take to address the inequalities that women face? One suggestion is to follow Dr. Kelly's framework that she shared at the FWIC Event on February 19th. For effective advocacy campaigns, she offered the ACE framework: attention, coalition, and emotion. She explained that grabbing attention is crucial, with only 8 seconds to engage someone in person and 4 seconds online. For building coalitions, Dr. Kelly emphasized finding allies with compatible goals. Lastly, she discussed the power of emotion in advocacy, particularly for women, stressing the importance of vulnerability and storytelling to create empathy and drive change.



Let's look for ways to see what we can do to help move to Accelerate Action on gender equality.

Yours in WI, Lynn

WI Day

Cutting the celebration cake for WI Week, FWIC President Lynn MacLean, Pictou District President Christine MacKenzie, and WINS President Margie Taylor enjoyed a celebration at Swiss Chalet on February 18th, 2025, with several WI members from the Pictou District, Nova Scotia.



PEI WI – Sheila Gallant, President

Each month we feature one province to get to know more about WIs across Canada. This month we are spotlighting Prince Edward Island. Here is a snapshot of WI in PEI presented by President Sheila Gallant.

Number of members - As in other provinces, this number fluctuates. At the time of reporting in 2024, we had 979 members.

Number of Branches - At the time of reporting in 2024, we had 67 branches.

2025 AGM Location - The Charlottetown Hotel

2025 AGM Theme - Resilient Together

Next change in provincial executive-May 23, 2025, at our Annual Convention



What is your province proud of this year? We have developed and witnessed growth over the past two years. The development of the Junior Women's Institute, where Junior members provide assistance to the branches in their work and the International Group of students studying at Holland College and UPEI.

We will be releasing a new book at our annual conference entitled *WI Resilience - The Untold Stories*, and a new cooking contest, which has been a cooperative effort by the Department of Agriculture, Island Farmers, Island Foods, and CBC.

In PEI, we have a monthly publication entitled *Notes and News* and a Quarterly newsletter publication, which is sent out to every branch. We use Facebook and e-mail.

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How does your province deal with resolutions once they have been passed at the AGM? The Board takes the resolution and makes efforts along with the WI office staff to connect with the required stakeholders. The Board determines if there is a need to form committees or working groups to move the resolution forward.

What is your main goal for this year (2025) and for 2026? As I will be moving into the Past President Position in May, my goal is to provide support to the board on any questions they may have. The new president, I believe, would like to maintain things at a status quo with efforts to continue to build membership.



What learning projects is your province engaged in this year? We held a series of fall workshops across the province (3 in total) where the ladies were given presentations to learn, as well as some sort of activity that fell within the category of “crafts,” where they interacted with others and learned new skills. We also held a learning session on February 13, entitled Founders Day, where there were presentations and games. At this session as well, we had a strategic planning session seeking the membership’s feedback on all the events planned by the board and ascertaining whether there needed to be changes made to the direction taken. A “did you know” series has been initiated where little tidbits of information are provided in monthly publications. The board itself requires each convener to provide one presentation a year to the board on a topic related to their convenorship.

What community projects will your members and branches be focusing on for 2025? It seems that every branch has its own preferred community projects. However, there are board initiatives shared across the province where branches all participate - 28 Days Taking Care of Business Period Campaign, Food Pantry Challenge, Cooking Contest, Founders Day, Fall Workshops, Gala Dinner, and Roadside Cleanup,

Does your province have a fundraising committee and what types of fundraisers do you do? Our province does not have a fundraising committee. The board is partially funded by the Department of Agriculture for programming and staff salaries. Each branch does its own fundraising. However, there is one initiative per year called the Festive Christmas Country Christmas Gala Dinner and Yuletide Auction held in November, which is the responsibility of the board to organize, which raises funds for our hospitals.

In closing, PEI has been successful in gaining new members by using contests over the past few years. We have recruited over 100 new members.

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Mindful Consumption: Sustainable Style National Project Submitted by Brenda Devauld

**Buy less, choose well, make it last.” -
Vivianne Westwood**

This quote seems to be a very appropriate way to open a discussion on Mindful Consumption this month with our Sustainable Style Project. It seems that the more research and investigation that is done on what sustainable fashion really means has led us to understand that the practice of mindful consumption is the main answer to many of the problems associated with the fashion industry and this is a concept we should apply to all of our fashion buying decisions.



Buy less, choose well, make it last.” - Vivianne Westwood

This quote is by fashion designer Vivianne Westwood, and it advocates for society to buy less, but when you need to buy something, choose high-quality and durable products. Vivianne Westwood was in the fashion industry, but she was a vocal advocate against overconsumption, and she believed that buying less and choosing well was the most environmentally friendly thing that people could do.

We have put together some questions, followed by insights into the questions. These questions are not meant to be judgemental but simply should be used as a tool to help bring awareness to our fashion choices. Consider sharing these questions with your branch and have a fun, open discussion! There are a lot of tips that we, as WI members, can share with each other on how we source our clothing, how we care for and repair our clothes, what we have in our closets, and what our thoughts are on mindful consumption and how we get there.

Mindful Consumption Clothing Questions:

1. Do you have items in your closet that you have never worn or worn very rarely?
2. Do you read the labels on your clothing? Are you aware of where and how your clothing is made and of what your clothing is made of?
3. Do you follow fashion trends?
4. Would you consider that you buy with the longevity of your clothing in mind or is this something you have never really thought about?
5. Do you repair and/or refashion your clothing?
6. What is the most mindful choice we can make for our wardrobes?

Answers - Question Review:

1. According to some studies, on average, people do not wear around 50% of their clothing. A common observation has been made that about 20% of clothing in a wardrobe is worn 80% of the time, and the remaining 80% is rarely used.
2. Besides including the size of the article, clothing labels in Canada provide essential information about a garment. Labels must specify the type and percentage of fibers used in a piece of clothing. They must also provide care instructions on how to wash, dry, and iron the garment. Labels must provide the country of origin, and they must also provide identification of the manufacturer by a number or by name. This number called the CA Identification Number, is a five-digit number that identifies

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Canadian manufacturers, importers, and sellers of textile products. The RN number is for those companies in the United States. Tracing a garment that was made in China, exported to the U.S., and then on to Canada shows the journey of the garment and how profitable this industry must be.

3. Exploring fashion trends can be fun and an exciting way to express yourself, but “Fast” fashion, as we are seeing globally, comes with a big price tag, both environmentally and ethically. Unfair labor practices, child labor, and poor environmental standards are rampant in the fashion industry. Fast fashion is also contributing to a negative self-perception and how people see others. It is having negative impacts on mental health by the never-ending message that we “are” what we wear, and we can never just be enough.

So, if you want to be creative in your clothing habits, why not mix it up? Explore thrift shops for unique finds, invest in key pieces that you can mix with trendy items, and don't feel pressured to follow every trend. Trendy clothes are often of poor quality and only meant to last for a very limited time before being thrown away, which is a waste of money and material.

4. Buying clothes with longevity in mind is a smart way to save money, reduce waste, and build a sustainable wardrobe. Here are a few tips:

Invest in well-made clothing, and look for details like reinforced seams and good stitching

If possible, opt for natural fibers like cotton, linen, silk, and wool. Try to avoid synthetic fibers (like polyesters and rayon). They tend to be low quality and made from oil products that do not biodegrade. Natural fiber clothing usually tends to be more expensive than synthetic clothing, but they are more breathable, more durable, have antibacterial qualities, and retain their shape for many years.

Choose versatile pieces that you can mix and match with other pieces and ones that won't go out of style. Make sure the garment fits well and is comfortable. Poor-fitting clothes tend not to be worn as often.

5. Repairing our clothes seems to have gone out of fashion, but perhaps it's time to rethink this.

Get a basic sewing kit, needles, thread, pins, and scissors; it's easier to repair things if we have the tools. If a button is missing, sew it back on, patch up holes, repair hems that have become undone, and replace zippers (or find a local person who will do these repairs). The point is don't throw out clothing that just needs simple repairs. Consider having a demonstration in your community or at a WI meeting where these types of skills can be taught. We might be surprised at the number of people that would like to learn.

6. Last but not most importantly, the most mindful choice we can make for our wardrobes is to choose the one we already have. As we buy new, yes, let's buy for sustainability and longevity but it doesn't make sense to replace the clothes we already have bought with others. All fabric, whether natural or synthetic, has environmental and/or ethical impacts. Challenge yourself not to buy any new clothing for a month, 6 months, a year, whatever you feel comfortable with, and wear what you already have.

We hope this article encourages people to take control of their own clothing practices and to feel good about themselves in doing so. Mindful consumption is called the “New” way of looking at ourselves and living, but it is also the way many of our grandparents lived, and many people are already living. It is about educating ourselves and being responsible for our choices. Nothing goes “away”, it just gets relocated.

Glossary of Terms

Mindful Consumption: This means to be aware of how your buying choices will impact the environment and society. To ask the question: Do I really need it?

Sustainable: This means the ability to maintain or support a process continuously over time.

Fast fashion: This is the process of mass production of clothing designs, producing them at low costs and low quality, and bringing them to retail stores quickly. It has huge detrimental environmental and social impacts.

Natural Clothing Material: These are products made from plant, animal, or mineral sources.

Synthetic Clothing Material: These products are made from chemicals and petroleum-based compounds. They are also known as artificial fibers.

Biodegradable: Biodegradable items are those that are capable of being broken down by bacteria or other living organisms into basic substances that are found in nature.

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Crafting Style Submitted by Ann Mandziuk, Manitoba WI

Do you enjoy having a splash of colour and decoration for special days? I like to add some hearts for Valentines and now they are being switched out for some Shamrocks for St. Patrick's Day.

I've included a couple of quick ideas for low-cost shamrocks. PDF patterns are included, or you can download your own by doing a Google search.

The first decoration is made of paper. I cut five different sizes of shamrocks from green paper. I used plain paper, but you could use spring flower patterned paper if you like. I happened to have some adhesive foam circles in my stash, but you could use glue or double-stick tape to attach them together. The foam circles give a bit of a 3D effect to the decoration. (If you are a scrapbook addict, you might already have some dimensional dots).



The second idea is made with felt, but you could also use fabric scraps. One set is stitched together using a running stitch and a bit of stuffing for a puffy look. I raided my button box for some accents on each shamrock. Ribbon or string can be used as a hanger. This set was made several years ago when I was a 4-H sewing leader. The girls I worked with were able to construct these for one of their projects. As beginner sewers the running stitch was easier to master.

The 2 with three shamrocks superimposed are felt as well, and the top one is stitched to the second one with a blanket stitch (I used three strands of embroidery cotton.) Then the middle shamrock is attached to the largest one. Then they are stitched together and lightly stuffed. Use your imagination – a green print fabric would add interest. They could also be embellished.



The sky is the limit for these projects. See what you have on hand and try to use those items instead of having to purchase new materials. The Valentine's card from my husband was in a red envelope, and it has been added to my stash of coloured paper.

I would love to see what you have made, hear ideas you might like to share, or something you would like me to include in this section. Up next April and Easter!

Please send feedback to wiconnections@fwic.ca

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Healthcare in Rural Communities (summary of the series of articles appearing in the NBWI Newsletter), by June Crandall, Elgin (NB) WI Secretary-Treasurer

Healthcare is everyone's problem! Maybe I should say the lack of healthcare. This article does not reflect the position of the healthcare systems in New Brunswick unless it is directly cited. The thoughts, ideas, and opinions are going to be mostly anecdotal. I will begin by telling you a bit about myself. I grew up in Elgin, Albert County, NB. My siblings and I were raised in a God-fearing household. My mother, my grandmother, and my great-grandmother were all WI members. So, I am going to accurately state that WI was hard-wired into my DNA from an early age. At the age of 23, I married and moved to the US. Years later, I retired from a 25-year career in Social Science Research and moved back to my native home in Elgin. It is so good to be home!

Shortly after settling back in Elgin, I joined the WI and am now volunteering in several other groups. As I refamiliarized myself with my community after 44 years in the US, I noted one glaring problem (I heard a lot of commentaries on the issue) ----lack of adequate healthcare in my community and local areas. According to the [Canadian Institute for Health Information](http://www.cihi.ca) (CIHI), between 2019 and 2021, New Brunswick was below the Canadian

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average in avoidable deaths from treatable causes (NB=67 vs Canada=61), meaning that more individuals died in NB than the Canadian average. Note that according to CIHI, this has been trending downward since 2010. I decided there must be something that can be done at the community level to help people. So, I reached out to people who serve on a common committee with me who are striving to bring change to the community. That committee is the Community Health and Wellness Advisory Committee (CAC).

I suggested to some key members of the CAC that I would like to see some kind of healthcare clinic in Elgin. The Elgin area, now Ward 3 of the Community of Three Rivers Municipality, is rural/sub-rural, with 54% of the population, as of the 2021 Census, being over age 50. I knew from hearing from several of the community members that many had little or no access to primary healthcare. So, having a clinic in this area would benefit a fair number of people. With the support of the Community Developers at Horizon Health Network (HHN) for our area, Amy O'Keefe and Alannah Pearson, who sits on the CAC with me, emerged plans to begin a low-level health care screening clinic in Elgin. On board were the University of New Brunswick Nursing Clinical Instructor, Mary-Lee Gillis, and the Petitcodiac and Salisbury Health Centers Manager, Joe Gallant. We met virtually several times over a few months to identify problems/concerns, timing for the clinics, staffing, materials, location, and supplies. And, of course, to ultimately get buy in from the province's health authority – Horizon Health. Within a few months, we were operationally on track. The UNB Nursing Director worked with her advisors and leadership to determine the availability and role of the student nurses and what services they would be able to provide as students in the UNB Nursing program in Moncton. Because they were registered nursing students, there were limitations in the types and invasiveness of the screening they could provide.

The team worked to identify the services, equipment, and how to promote the launch of the Adult Health Screening Clinics in Elgin. The launch date for the first clinic was set for January 24, 2024. Horizon Health provided some medical supplies and privacy walls (for "patients"). The medical supplies included lancets (blood glucose testing), blood pressure cuffs, heart rate and oxygen saturation monitors, and equipment for BMI analysis. Additionally, because this was, at that time, a pilot study, we realized that we needed to collect some basic satisfaction information from the patients. We developed a brief questionnaire that omitted the need for patients to give any identifiable information such as phone number, name, address, etc. We collected postal code information to identify the general area where the patients lived at the time of their visit and the patient's age so we could determine the average age. The example questionnaire can be shared with any area looking to replicate this kind of screening clinic. We also developed a patient passport used by the nurses to log the results of the screening and was retained by the patients who were advised to bring the booklet with them to each subsequent screening visit. This would be very helpful to them to see any changes between screenings, plus provide some essential information to any health care provider.

Just to be clear, the Adult Health Screening Clinics are not a WI initiative but the brainchild of the Elgin WI member. However, support and buy-in from the WI and the Elgin Seniors Club were critical as these groups have a good understanding of the needs and the pulse of the community given their volunteer work, and most importantly, the WI rightly rationalized that collaboration in small rural communities was key.

The next and final article will include the results of the first clinic, which was one clinic per month for 3 months, the next set of clinics (new services offered), and the most recent set of clinics (new services offered). I will include some statements from community members as well as some information on clinic attendance and where we want to go with future clinics in this community.

CONTACTS

To contact the FWIC president, email Lynn MacLean at president@fwic.ca or call her cell at 902 759 4755.
Lynn lives in Nova Scotia.

To contact the president-elect, email Angela at president-elect@fwic.ca. 506-277-6340
Angela lives in New Brunswick.

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Adelaide Hunter Hoodless

Canadian Woman of the Year Nominations

Criteria:

Profile (max 750 words)

Exhibits qualities of Adelaide Hoodless

Leadership

Gives back to the community

Inspires others

Two Letters of Recommendation (individual or organization – not from Nominator)

Completed Application with Nominee's Photo & Nominator's Contact Info

Women's Institute Involvement (not necessarily a member)

Drop off, email, mail, or courier your completed nomination form with the attached profile to:

Federated Women's Institutes of Canada

359 Blue Lake Road, PO Box 209

St. George, Ontario NOE 1N0

Email: info@fwic.ca

Deadline: March 31, 2025



All About Agriculture Submitted by Susan Hoszouski, BCWI

THE CANADIAN FOODGRAINS BANK:

The Canadian Foodgrains Bank works with partner organizations to provide food aid and support farmers in developing countries, such as a Congolese chicken farmer, to grow food and support their families and communities. The Canadian Foodgrains Bank is a partnership of 15 church and church-based agencies working together to end global hunger.

The Canadian Foodgrains Bank was formed in 1983, but the story truly started in the mid-1970s when Canadian farmers were looking for a way to share their abundance of grain with people facing hunger around the world. From these rural roots, the Canadian Foodgrains Bank provides emergency food assistance and long-term development to 30 countries annually with over 100 international partners.

In 1974, there was a Famine in Bangladesh. Farmers in western Canada were enjoying bumper crops, and they wanted to share their excess grains. The farmers called on the

Mennonite Central Committee Canada (MCCC) to find a way, and they proposed the creation of a food bank that could receive grain from Canadian farmers.

In 1975, the MCCC Food Bank was created based on the "Joseph Principle," storing up grain in the good years for use in the bad times. The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), now Global Affairs Canada, agrees to provide matching funds, and this partnership continues to this day. The Canadian Foodgrains Bank, with the



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support of the Government of Canada, manages a draw-down fund to provide food assistance to people experiencing humanitarian crises around the world.

In 1977, the first shipment of food was sent to India. This shipment was 660 tonnes of grain. The CFGB was born in 1983, with encouragement from the Government of Canada. In 1984, the Foodgrains Bank responded to the famine in Ethiopia, marking the network's first major response to global hunger.

In 2008, the Government of Canada untied food aid completely, meaning that no longer food for aid overseas had to be purchased in Canada. This allowed the CFGB to use funds provided to purchase food in developing countries. Grains donated by farmers in Canada are sold in the Canadian market, and proceeds are used to purchase food closer to the area of need.

In 2018, the Foodgrains Bank reached over 1 billion dollars in assistance since it started, assisting tens of millions of people in over 70 countries. Canadians from all walks of life, rural, urban, farmers, and non-farmers, all join in these collective efforts to end global hunger. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates there are over 757 million people around the world who don't have enough food.

The Canadian Foodgrains Bank says it can't back down from its commitments to help the hungry, especially in the face of US foreign aid funding cuts. The recent weakening of the Canadian dollar has reduced the Foodgrains Bank's buying power as much aid spending is done in American dollars. International aid contributes to Canada's influence around the world, and it's good to go around the world and see Canadian flags flying over many great development projects that the locals are extremely proud of and thankful for. The work the Canadian Foodgrains Bank does is important, it impacts nearly a million people a year with great results.

Homestead Report from Nancy Submitted by Nancy Caruba

Hello everyone: Here is the Adelaide Hunter Hoodless Homestead report for February 2025.

-In February (2nd), Dr. Michael Williams (AHHH Writer in Residence) conducted a workshop called " Legacy Love Letter." This workshop was for those who wished to put down on paper the appreciation and love of someone who has meant something to them. Four guests had a heartfelt experience.

-On Valentine's Day, we had our annual Valentine's Italian Lunch celebration. It was a big hit. (and a lot of work - wink wink) - A big help by Linda Zelem and volunteer Bonnie for their tremendous help.

-In February, we got our first 2025 wedding booking! We are charging \$1500 for each booking.

-I have a meeting with another couple tonight. Fingers crossed.



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You will recall AHH homestead and another heritage venue (memorial hall) in St. George have partnered to promote St George Heritage Weddings

- There were five museum tours to date in the month of February.

-This month, we are preparing for the AHHH arts program events. The "site-specific theater event" will be called Summer's Milk. It is an enacted tour of the museum, which requires recorded sounds that mimic life in the 1800's we are working with the Paris Quilting Bee Guild to recreate the sounds of women quilting and spinning yarn

-On Friday, Feb 21st, there will be a script reading event for "Skater." The play is based on the life of Adelaide Hunter Hoodless. Actors will read their parts and guests are invited to provide script feedback. The costs of this event are covered by the Trillium Seed grant for the AHHH Arts Program. Free Will donations to the museum will be requested.



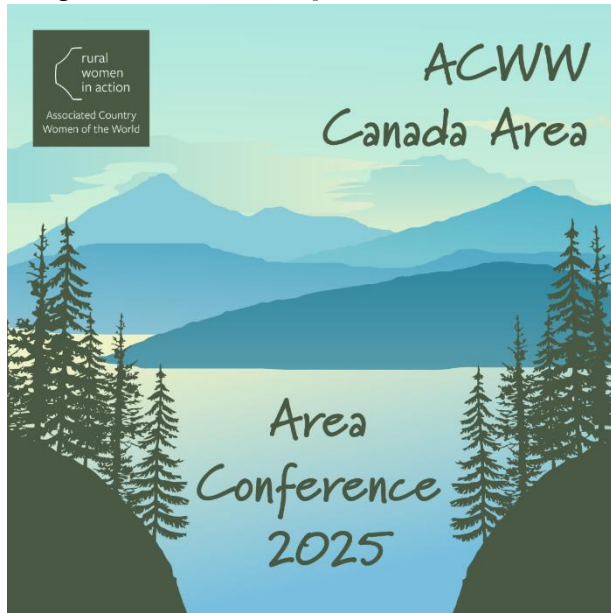
February is Women's Institute Month. As part of W. I. Cares, the Harbour Grace Women's Institute recently presented donations to O'Shaughnessy House. Harbour Grace, NL

WI Connections Contributions

All contributions are welcome. Please send to wiconnections@fwic.ca
jpeg and png photos are ideal, along with word documents or emailed messages.
Sorry pdf documents do not format well. Please avoid formatting such as indenting, formatted numbers and bulleting. And thank you for your interest in telling about WI in your 'neck of the woods'.

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Registration is Open Now



ACWW Area of Canada Conference — May 13th to 15th, Langford BC (Victoria)

Feb. 16th to April 15th - \$225.00

Please go to acww.org.uk for registration details and find out about pre- and post-tours available and partner tours.

There has been some confusion raised regarding the booking of the hotels. Please note that to get the deal, book rooms from the 13th to the 16th of May.

Then contact the hotel for days you wish to add to your stay, either before and/ or after. (Just like we did when traveling to Malaysia.)

Register now; we would love to see you in Victoria/Langford on beautiful Vancouver Island to renew friendships and make new ones, share in hearing all about ACWW, and learn about projects and funding processes, plus all other speakers booked for your

enjoyment and learning experience.

Come and meet your World President, Magdie de Kock, from South Africa and ACWW - ED- Tish Collins, London,

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“Let’s Chat” ...

a Conversation between ACWW Canada Area President Marie Kenny and Dr. Ellen McLean.

“What inspired you to let your name forth for World President, and what was your vision for the organization?”

Your questions this month, Marie, have really challenged me to contemplate my involvement with ACWW over the years; I am just going to start with the first question. Some of my answers may answer the second one, or perhaps if I am a little long-winded, it might have to be continued on a future chat.



As I told you, realizing that there was an international involvement in the Women’s Institute was of great interest to me. Then, over the years, I read excerpts in our provincial newsletter taken from ACWW’s newsletter, The Countrywoman; this gave me an insight into that international component. I listened and read with great interest reports of our delegates to ACWW conferences in Ceylon (Sri Lanka) in 1956, Edinburgh in 1959, and Australia in 1962. Each time I hoped that someday I would be able to attend an ACWW conference. That hope was realized in 1965 when I was our province’s delegate to the conference in Dublin, Ireland.

Our provincial president, who should have been the delegate, was unable to attend. It was quite an overwhelming experience being the lone delegate from Nova Scotia with hundreds of women from around the world (and many from Ireland). I was happy to have other Canadian delegates who had attended previous conferences and could answer my questions. I don’t know how it happened, but I was asked to be one of the presenters in one of the workshops. The following year, 1966, I was able to attend an ACWW annual Council meeting because I was in

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England at the time of the meeting. I was just able to attend Open Day. Attendance at the Business Sessions and carried a vote for the Women's Institutes of Nova Scotia was an English W.I. member. I will give an explanation for that later! In 1968, the Conference was held in Dearborn, Michigan.

As nominations for officers were submitted several months prior to that, I received a letter from a Society in India asking me to accept the nomination for World President. I couldn't believe what I was reading. I showed the letter to my husband, and we agreed that they must have been confused as to whom they were writing. Needless to say, I refused. Becoming the World President had never entered my mind and never was thought about or considered until I was asked to accept the nomination for the election at the Vancouver Conference in 1983. The rest is history!

"Council" was part of ACWW's governance. Council meetings were held annually, two days of business, and one day was Open Day. Societies that could vote at the Conference had a vote at the Council. I always felt that the Council was an excellent part of ACWW. Those meetings gave the members the opportunity to get "updates" on what was happening in ACWW. The World President gave a report of her activities, there was a financial report, as well as reports from the various Committees. Any decisions that were made could be revoked at the next Conference.

Three years go by fairly quickly, but it was very helpful to meet annually. In our case in Canada, there were just two of our Societies, Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario and Federated Women's Institutes of Canada, that felt they could afford to send someone to England for just a two or three-day event. That was why we were so pleased when the Mrs. Alfred Watt Fund was established, which was to be used for Council meetings, and I was thrilled to see a representative from each of our 14 Societies at the 1986 Council. At the time when our Societies couldn't send someone, they appointed a W.I. member in England to represent them. This was less than ideal. We usually had excellent representatives, but communications were a challenge, and our Canadian Societies often felt frustrated because of that.

I attended Conferences in Oslo, Norway, in 1971 and in Perth, Australia in 1974, so I continued to learn more and more about ACWW - what it is, what it does, and how it works.

In 1977, at the Triennial Conference in Nairobi, Kenya, I was privileged to be elected Area Vice President of Canada. That meant that I was now a member of the Board and had the opportunity to learn much more about our organization. And it also meant that I could and would continue to question and learn much more about our ACWW. I think, Marie, we should continue talking about some of the things I felt should perhaps be changed. I am trying to convince myself that this might be my vision or part of it.

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All About Pollination...submitted by Shelly Simrose, BCWI

Who is ready for Winter to be over? Over the years as I am getting older it seems like the winters last longer. They don't, but it sure feels like it. As I write this it is mid February. I can't say that I will be sad when the snow and ice are gone. Looking forward to green grass, more singing birds and the buzz of the bees. I could do without the mosquitoes, but I will enjoy the couple months of warmer weather before those pesky insects come out.

I am not much of a gardener, but I do have a couple small flower beds I enjoy putting in, and I do plant a few rows in my garden of produce. I ran across an article the other day that I would like to share with you. Did you know that there are so many kinds of pollinators?

Who pollinates?

Plants and pollinators evolved side by side over thousands of years. Natural selection has resulted in physical adaptations in both plants and pollinators. Plants developed many complex ways of attracting pollinators. Similarly, pollinators evolved with specialized physical traits and behaviours that enhance their pollination efforts. Each participant, plant and pollinator, usually gains a benefit from pollination.

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Bees: Flower nectar provides bees with the sugar to fuel their flights. The proteins and amino acids in pollen are vital nutrients needed by young bee larvae back in the next. Bees are not picky and frequently visit a large variety of flowers.

Beetles: Beetles are referred to as “mess and soil” pollinators. Less elegant than other pollinators, beetles blunder their way through delicate blossoms searching for food, a mate, or perhaps the bathroom. Beetles frequently visit magnolias and flowers close to the ground.

Butterflies: Butterflies often visit round flowers with flared petals that lead to narrow throats that conceal nectar. Butterflies land on the wide petals, then delicately probe the flower’s nectary (the gland that produces nectar) with their long proboscis (tongue). Butterflies frequently visit salvias and sunflowers.

Flies: Some flies act just like bees, visiting sweet-smelling flowers. Others have more disgusting tastes. They are attracted to flowers with putrid odors, meat-like colors, or fur-like textures that lure them in by pretending to be the fresh dung of dead animals that flies desire. Flies frequently visit Dutchman’s pipe, pawpaw, and some viburnums.

Hummingbirds: The long, thin bill and tongue of a hummingbird allows it to reach the nectar hidden deeply in tubular flowers. The Ruby-throated hummingbird is the only species that breeds on the East Coast each summer, after traveling up from Mexico and Central America. Hummingbirds frequently visit beebalm and honeysuckle.

Moths: Most moths go unnoticed even though they outnumber butterflies 10 to 1. Why? They are often active at night and dull in appearance. Night-blooming flowers have sweet scents and white or cream colored blossoms that reflect the moonlight to attract moths after the sun sets. Moths frequently visit four o’clocks, moonflowers, and tobacco.

Wind: Not all pollination relies on animals. Wind pollinates grains, most nuts, many trees, and the wild grasses that provide forage for livestock. The odds are small that a pollen grain will find its way to a corn silk, but each kernel of corn is a tiny fruit resulting from successful wind pollination. Part 2 of Pollination will come in April!

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Recipe A Month Submitted by Debra Barrett, Manitoba WI

Fish and Peanut Sauce

Ingredients:

- 3 Tbsp peanut butter
- 1/2 lb. smoked fish
- 1/2 medium onion
- 1/2 medium tomato (or 1 Tbsp. tomato paste)
- 1 tsp. curry powder
- pinch salt
- 2 Tbsp. cooking oil



Directions:

- Fry onion in oil until brown
- Add tomatoes or 1 Tbsp. tomato paste
- Add peanut butter and some water to prevent burning
- Add smoked fish. Add more water according to the thickness of the sauce you want.
- Cook to boil and leave at low heat for 45 minutes.
- Serve over mashed potatoes, rice, yams or boiled and mashed green bananas.

Recipe from Agnes Mawejje, Fisher Branch WI

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WI Members from Pictou District, Nova Scotia, celebrating WI Week at Swiss Chalet Feb. 18th, 2025.

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This & That Submitted by Elizabeth Rushton, Alberta Women's Institute

NELLIE McCLUNG -Never retract, never explain,
never apologize, get the thing done, and let them howl.

Nellie Mooney was born October 20, 1873, in Chatsworth, Ontario, one of six children. She was rambunctious and stubborn, and that stubborn streak stayed with her during her life as she fought for women's right to vote, became one of the Famous Five, and was a strong supporter of prohibition.

The family moved to Manitoba, and Nellie became a teacher, teaching for several years before marrying Wes McClung and becoming a wife and mother of five children, something she had vowed she would never become. It was during that time that she wrote *Times Like These*, the first of 15 books, and because of that book, she was invited by her mother-in-law to speak to the local chapter of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, at which time she realized she could both write and speak.

After the family moved to Winnipeg from Manitou, Nellie joined the Canadian Women's Press Club and began touring local factories to understand working conditions and wages and was horrified at what she found out. It wasn't long before she realized that the laws supposed to protect the weakest members of society were woefully inadequate. Nancy Millar, in her book *The Famous Five*, says, "She always worked within her church. Even though she wasn't always as stern as her Methodist mother would have preferred, nor as silent as her long-suffering Methodist ministers would have liked, she turned up every Sunday to teach Sunday School, to debate with the minister after the service, to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable."

She enthusiastically supported the newly formed Women's Political Equality League and traveled around Manitoba, persuading women to work for the vote, which would mean they could vote for better schools and hospitals and even for peace.

The family moved to Edmonton in time for the women in Alberta to storm the legislature and ask for the vote for women, which was granted in 1916, the third province to give women the vote, following Manitoba in 1915 and Saskatchewan a month before Alberta. She was elected a Liberal member of the legislature, but she voted as she saw fit, particularly on matters affecting women and children, and often with Irene Parlby (another of the Famous Five), who was a member of the governing United Farmers of Alberta.

In 1919, she was a charter member of the Edmonton branch of the Alberta Women's Institutes and its first president. The year before, she had also traveled to Winnipeg with Emily Murphy and others when the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada was formed.

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Nellie was stunned when, in 1924, prohibition was repealed by the voters of Alberta, and in 1926, she lost the election. However, in 1927, Emily Murphy appeared with her petition to have women declared as persons, and of course, Nellie signed it. She continued to fight for the things she believed in, even women in the pulpit as fully ordained members of the clergy.

After moving to Victoria, BC, in 1932, life slowed down for her, though she became the first woman on the CBC Board of Governors and naturally fought for more women's programs and members of staff. She died in 1951 at the age of 78 and is buried in Victoria. She had many pertinent sayings, and you can easily find them online – worth reading as she had quite a devastating wit and way of wording things.

My Stony Plain Branch (just west of Edmonton) minutes from 1916 record Nellie coming to Stony Plain to speak – apparently, she came from Edmonton on the train, stayed overnight with one of our members, and returned on the train the next day. There was a 25-cent charge for adults and 10 cents for children, with no charge for members of the Junior Red Cross. Bunting was to be purchased to decorate the grounds and porch at the Demonstration Farm and there is a photograph in our local history book, *Along the Fifth*, recording the event. The following month's minutes record that \$4.00 was raised at her visit, though it doesn't say if that was 'taken at the door' or profit after the purchase of the bunting! Nor do the minutes record what Nellie talked about, but one can be pretty certain that it was women's rights and prohibition.

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Promoting Mental Health by Celebrating Achievements

Submitted by Sue Cushing, FWIO

Kindness - ARK

Kindness is defined as doing something toward yourself and others, motivated by a genuine desire to make a positive difference. We know from the research that kindness and our mental health are deeply connected. The research shows that kindness is an antidote to isolation and creates a sense of belonging. It helps reduce stress, brings a fresh perspective, and deepens friendships. Kindness to ourselves can prevent shame from corroding our sense of identity and help boost our self-esteem. Kindness can even improve feelings of confidence and optimism.

Kindness is more than behavior. The art of kindness involves harboring a spirit of helpfulness, being generous and considerate, and doing so without expecting anything in return.

Rather than viewing it exclusively as an action, think of kindness as a quality of being you can cultivate. Giving kindness is often simple, free, and health-enhancing.

Good for the body

Kindness has been shown to increase self-esteem, empathy, compassion and improve mood. It can decrease blood pressure and cortisol, a hormone directly correlated with stress levels. People who give of themselves in a balanced way also tend to be healthier and live longer.

Kindness can increase your sense of connectivity with others, decrease loneliness, combat low mood, and improve relationships. It also can be contagious, encouraging others to join in with their own generous deeds.

Looking for ways to show kindness can give you something to focus on, especially if you are anxious or stressed in certain social situations.

Good for the mind

Physiologically, kindness can positively change your brain by boosting levels of serotonin and dopamine. These neurotransmitters produce feelings of satisfaction and well-being and cause the pleasure and reward centers in your brain to light up. Endorphins, your body's natural painkiller, also may be released when you show kindness.



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Be kind to yourself

When sharing kindness, it's not just how you treat other people — it's also about how you extend those same behaviors and intentions to yourself. I believe you can be kinder in your own self-talk and practice gratitude. People are good at verbally beating themselves up, which does not work as a pep talk. Rather, negativity often causes you to unravel and may even create a vicious cycle of regularly getting down on yourself. You wouldn't talk to your neighbor the way you sometimes speak to yourself. This is what I call the good neighbor policy, which can be helpful. If you wouldn't say it to your good neighbor, don't say it about yourself.

Take action. Start your day with this question: "How am I going to practice kindness today?"

Organize a WI kindness meeting and document evidence of kindness to others and especially to ourselves during the day. This positive focus is like planting positive seeds in your mind garden. Where focus goes, energy flows.

"Acts of Random Kindness." How about you? Are you willing to get on the ARK?

Start an ARK program in your community, environment, home, and family.

In 2025, Canada is focusing on youth mental health and improving access to mental health services. As WI members, how can we use our experience and contacts to support this focus? **A discussion and action plan** with your fellow branch members can assist those in crisis in your communities, especially the youth.

Finally, a quote by the Dalai Lama: **"Be kind whenever possible. It is always possible"**.

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Finding Voice and Assertiveness Training Submitted by Angela Scott, President-Elect

I wonder how many WI women have ever considered assertiveness training. I did and ended up taking a specialty program at the University of New Brunswick called Third Party Neutral, which centered around conflict resolution and mediation. It was a transformative learning experience for sure- but it was not assertiveness. I ask because when I think of finding a voice, I think of assertiveness. As any bookworm would, I researched the topic and found a great little book ...*Assertiveness Training* by Andy Gardner.



Empowerment

"Being assertive will empower you to stand up for your beliefs," says Gardner. That's just what I want, but the term 'empower', which we hear a lot confuses me. What exactly does empower mean? If you have the ability to empower ...it refers to the process of gaining control over your life and claiming your rights – personal rights to DO something and make independent decisions. How clear it seems on paper, but for a 'people-pleaser' like me, there are plenty of barriers to becoming empowered and assertive. In fact, my personal desire to avoid conflict might be an indication of a lack of assertiveness skills.

Can assertiveness be learned?

Several factors contribute to the inability to be assertive. Overthinking, fear of rejection, feeling inferior, afraid of change, negative past experiences, or even thinking your own needs don't matter are some classic indicators of low assertiveness. So, what would help?

Assertiveness has two main ingredients. Feeling competent or able to know or do something; and plain, old-fashioned practice. The more we assert or share our feelings about any type of subject, the more assertive we become. And WI is a perfect and safe atmosphere for women to gain assertiveness and empowerment. The simple act of sharing your ideas or opinions in the sharing circle-part of every WI branch meeting builds our confidence and competence in being assertive. The next time you think of helping to empower someone or yourself, consider assertiveness and the ability to share. Be honest, be open, and share the arena floor with others.

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Another aspect of practicing assertiveness is the value of observing and witnessing older women. Over the years, I have gained a great deal from the examples of women practicing their assertiveness in group settings with calm serenity, yet straightforward and unafraid approaches.

Being assertive is about sharing in a safe space and realizing our feelings and ideas are valid and worth sharing. They deserve respect...we all deserve respect. As the Mary Stewart Collect says... "may we put away all pretense and meet each other face-to-face, without self-pity and without prejudice."

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**Marie Kenny,
ACWW Canada Area President**



Greetings Everyone,
We have experienced many weather challenges across our nation these past two months. From frigid cold temperatures in the West, to tons of snow in Central Canada to icy storms here in the East Coast. We will be waiting with great interest to see what the month of March will bring our way.

Across Canada many societies celebrated WI Day on February 19 with numerous outings, and social gatherings. It was a wonderful time of sharing the history and legacy that has uplifted, empowered and inspired many women to become leaders. The connection from Grassroots to the International platform of ACWW gives us much to celebrate and be thankful for as Canadians.



Eighty women representing every province in Canada joined FWIC President, Lynn MacLean and I as we collaborated on a WI Day and Advocacy Event using the Theme: Together We Rise. We looked at what that topic meant to us personally and what woman role models inspire in us. Denise Joss moderated the event and shared how Eleanor Roosevelt contributed to the United Nations initiatives for Basic Human Rights legislation. Following this Dr Elizabeth Ann Kelly did an informative and inspiring presentation on advocacy.

This was part one of a two-part workshop to educate and engage society members on the important role they play as advocates. Part two of this ACWW Advocacy Workshop will take place on March 7th. Please email Lynn at registrations@fwic.ca for a link to join in the conversation on March 7th Zoom call: Time zones: 6pm (UK) time. 1:00p, (EST). 10am (Pacific).

Part two ACWW Advocacy Workshop
 Time: Mar 7, 2025 01:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)
Join Zoom Meeting
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82259790135?pwd=yoxhS8pZ14tvIn5iaJ7CZyOKqHTmpn.1>
 Meeting ID: 822 5979 0135
 Passcode: 729420

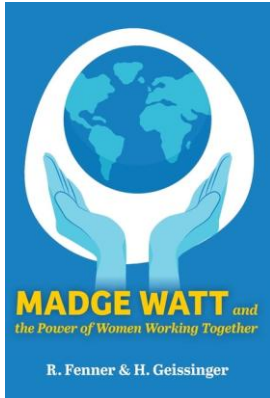
March 8th is International Women’s Day, Dr Elizabeth Ann Kelly, ACWW Advocacy lead will lead the ACWW delegation at CSW in New York, for information on the planned side event ACWW will be hosting please check out the ACWW website or email Central Office.

Regarding the Triennial World Conference, please take note: Conference Information #1, Call for Nominations for Election to the Board of Trustees 2026-2029 went out on October 24, 2024, and Conference Information #2,

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Call for Resolutions and Recommendations went out on February 13, 2025. These documents have timelines and information included.

Every year, on or around ACWW Day, the 29th of April, ACWW members all over the world join to raise funds for ACWW and share information about our work with their communities. This event is called Women Walk the World and has been going since 2012. Please send me updates and photos of your Women Walk the World Event on April 29th or whatever date has worked for you. Enjoy your event and celebrate with ACWW members globally.



Registration deadline for the ACWW Canada Area Conference, May 13- 15, Langford, BC is quickly approaching: April 15 is the closing date to send in your registration. Presently there are over 80 registered, please check the ACWW website for full details and registration packages. It promises to be a very educational, interesting and inspiring conference. There will also be registration for the Pre and Post Conference Tours to enjoy a bit more of the beautiful province of BC.

Madge Watt promoted the idea of women working together. Then she proceeded to demonstrate how such cooperation could lead to better conditions in the homes and countries through the efforts and influences of women. As we continue her legacy, I thank you for your ongoing support of the work of ACWW.

Until next time: Marie Kenny, ACWW Canada Area President

Vision Statement:

*Fostering a future where every woman thrives...
and makes a meaningful impact.*



International Women's Day, March 8th



Theme

Together We Rise