

# WI Connections

Monthly Newsletter of the  
Federated Women's Institutes of Canada



*Meet Karen Gerwing, Farmer/Combine Driver & Saskatchewan FWIC Representative.*

*"I enjoy my life on the farm in Lake Lenore, especially driving the combine at harvest time."*



Karen Gerwing has represented Saskatchewan WI since 2016 when Lynn Ballhorn was unable to complete her term. I also attended the fall board meetings of FWIC in 2010 in Brantford and 2014 at the Peace Gardens when the SWI representative was unavailable to attend. I finally attended a FWIC Convention in Winnipeg in 2018. I immigrated from Australia in 1984 and joined the Kelstern Branch of SWI in 1985 at the age of 22. I joined the WI because my Grandmother and Mother were members of the Country Women's Association in South Australia. The SACWA has membership in ACWW. Joining a WI branch seemed to be a good way of meeting people and learning new things about the country I had moved to.

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## *Adelaide Hunter Hoodless Homestead*

submitted by Emily Jackson and Roxana Maturana, Archival Assistants



## *Culture Days*

A month-long event that spreads awareness of arts and culture throughout the province. It is taking place from September 24-October 24 2021. We have 3 days of on-site events planned, 2 days of online events, and some online activities throughout the month.

On Friday, September 24 2021 the Adelaide Hunter Hoodless Homestead will kick off Culture Days 2021 with our first in-person event! From 11-4 visit the birthplace of the co-founder of the Women's Institute. Immerse yourself in the rural life of Canada West, try your hand at our Victorian games, including croquet, charades, kite making and reproduction wooden toys, and tour the Homestead.



On Friday, October 8 2021 the Adelaide Hunter Hoodless Homestead will host a Fall themed activity day full of activities for all ages! Activities include; crafts, outdoor games, butter making demonstrations, playing with reproduction toys, and tours of the Homestead.

On Friday, October 22 2021 bring your family heirlooms and treasures to the Adelaide Hunter Hoodless Homestead to our Artifact Preservation Workshop! Our knowledgeable museum staff will show you tips and tricks to preserve your precious family memories. Tours of the Homestead and crafts are also available throughout the day.

**JOIN US @ ADELAIDE HUNTER HOODLESS HOMESTEAD FOR CRAFTS & GAMES!**

SEPT 24, OCT. 8, 22, 2021 · 11:00 AM  
359 BLUE LAKE RD, ST. GEORGE

**CULTURE DAYS**

SEPTEMBER 24 – OCTOBER 24  
GET STARTED AT CULTUREDAYS.CA

**FWIC**  
FEDERATED WOMEN'S INSTITUTES OF CANADA

NATIONAL PARTNERS

Canada  
CINEPLEX

Canada Council / Conseil des arts  
for the Arts / du Canada

PATTISON

BT/A



## Margaret's Message submitted by President, Margare Byl

Just a brief note .... It is hard to believe that we are in the middle of September! Harvesting is in full swing and kitchens from coast to coast to coast are singing with the sounds of pots and pans and canning jars rattling with the busy sounds of food processing, canning, freezing and drying in anticipation for our cold Canadian winter days.

The FWIC/WI Canada Board of Directors have also been busy with several Board Meetings planning for the future of FWIC/WI Canada. One of the items on our September 13<sup>th</sup> Board Agenda was "FWIC – Who are we?" In short, our legal name is the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada, the official symbol is our Crest and WI Canada is the common name and logo. Our Mission: We are a national network for women and families to promote leadership and personal development opportunities through education and fellowship. Our Objectives are to provide a united voice for the Women's Institutes; initiate programs and to provide resource material and to provide a medium of intercommunication among the units of the Federation.



That is why I was pleased that the Board of Directors chose to make a motion and approve a plan from the Communications Committee to move ahead with WI Canada Leadership Modules...Communications Training for Tomorrow's Leaders. Thank you to Angela Scott and her team for moving forward with these important modules. Community and volunteer involvement at the Adelaide Hunter Hoodless Homestead are encouraging. A volunteer introduction Meet and Greet was held in August with a great turn out. Donations continue to come in and we are most grateful for your continued support. Joan Holthe and Linda Mason continue to pursue grant opportunities and crafts and knitted goods are always welcome for the Addie's Gift Shop. Please read the update on activities attached. On another note, Covid-19 continues to be prevalent across our nation. Please remind others to comply with your Province's protocols. Stay safe and stay well!

In closing, I'd like to leave you with a few words of inspiration.

*"Great things are not done by impulse,  
but by a series of small things brought together."  
- George Elliot-*



## Homestead Report submitted by Emily Jackson and Roxana Maturana, Archival Assistants

This month we took on many projects to promote the Homestead and increase our visitors numbers. We have; planned St. George Applefest Adventures and Culture Days events to take place at the Homestead in September and October. These events are fall themed and will be heavily advertised and marketed in the community and online. Furthermore, Roxana has created new marketing materials for the Homestead including; posters, brochures, business cards, and new merchandise for the gift shop. These new marketing materials will be used to promote the museum and increase awareness.

We also rearranged and updated the Homestead's layout by moving the gift shop into the Reception Room where it is easier to access and flows better with the tours and rearranged the office space to create a workspace for archival research to be done by the public without Roxana and Emily encroaching on the space. The new set also allows more people to be able to use the space safely at once as they are better able to social distance.

Emily made all new educational programs for the Homestead. These programs reach a wide range of ages and groups. There is a program for grades 1-3, grades 11-12, seniors and Girl Guides and Boy Scouts. These programs can be used all year round and can be run by volunteers as Emily has made instructor guides to help them navigate the program to execute it as planned.

On August 24th we hosted a Volunteer Orientation where members of the community could attend an information session about how to volunteer at the Homestead. As of August 30th we have one volunteer who has completed their Vulnerable Sector Check and will begin volunteering soon.

Emily found a grant from the federal economic development agency of Southern Ontario. The Tourism Relief Fund grant is a non-repayable contribution, with up to \$100,000 for up to 50% of eligible costs. We would use the funding from this grant to increase tourism in Brant County by overhauling our current marketing strategy and possibly hiring a marketing person. Emily has filled out most of the grant and sent it to Linda for financial input and information.

Since we have been able to reopen the museum at the end of July for tours, we have had six tours this month and two pavilion bookings. The majority of these tour groups have left us a monetary donation in addition to their admission fees. With the increase in tours Roxana set up the Square Payment system on the tablet and Homestead phone. Now we are easily able to take credit cards, cash, or cheques as forms of payment for the gift shop, tour admission and pavilion rental fees.



Every Friday, and throughout the week if we find something interesting, we have been posting to the museum’s Instagram and Facebook to bring more awareness about the museum and draw in visitors. This is in accordance with one of the tasks listed on Young Canada Works that requires us to post every Friday on social media.



*PEI Women’s Institute Update* submitted by Ellen MacPhail

The PEIWI Board of Directors is pleased to expand on details for WI’s popular fall workshops, including participation in Purple Ribbon Campaign and holiday events. Submitted by PEI WI

A variety of themes will be part of WI’s Fall Workshops, including a session with provincial WI Vice President Sheila MacLean on Meeting Etiquette; The Newcomer Experience with Carolina Arango Rosero, from Colombia (Oct 19<sup>th</sup>) and Evelina Sharipova, from Russia (Oct 27<sup>th</sup>); followed by Soleil Hutchinson, 2021 WI Women In Agriculture Award Winner (Oct 19<sup>th</sup>) and Santina Beaton with Farm & Food Care PEI (Oct 21<sup>st</sup>) on Field to Table – Our Agriculture Connection. In person sessions will take place on Tuesday, October 19<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m. at the St. Eleanor’s Lion Club in Summerside and Wednesday, October 27<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m. at the St. Joachims’ Hall in Vernon River.

A hybrid in-person and online session will take place on Thursday, October 21<sup>st</sup> at 10:00 a.m. at the Farm Centre in Charlottetown. This event is an online twinning event with Women’s Institutes from the United Kingdom to complement their centurion celebration and create friendships. Pre-registration is required by Friday, October 13<sup>th</sup> for all workshops.

In November, PEIWI has altered course in their annual fundraiser event for hospitals. The Board has re-organized their annual fundraiser event into a Festive Christmas Gala Dinner and Yuletide Auction. Baked holiday goods will highlight the event. Proceeds this year will go towards the Souris Hospital and Kings Country Memorial Hospital. This event is planned for Wednesday, November 17 at the Delta Prince Edward Ballroom in Charlottetown. Tickets are now on sale for \$100 with a portion of the proceeds eligible for a tax receipt.

Congratulations to the Greater Charlottetown Women’s Institute branch on achieving the Subscriber level of recognition (\$5,000 - \$9,999) through their collections obtained through these wreaths and given to the QEH Foundation. As a result of their efforts, the Greater Charlottetown Women’s Institute branch name will be displayed on the donor wall located in the lobby of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH). Their accumulative sales of Christmas wreaths enabled this milestone. The QEH Foundation advised approximately 180 donors have reached new levels of cumulative donations, and all will be published in their upcoming annual report. Thank you to all members who annually support health care in Prince Edward Island.



The Advisory Council on the Status of Women is returning to distributing purple ribbons and



bookmarks this year, and is seeking assistance from PEIWI members to once again pin ribbons to cards for the annual Purple Ribbon Campaign. They will be distributed in communities across the Island. Materials will be available in the WI office for pick up by October 4, and should be returned by November 12. The theme of the 2021-2022 Campaign is Reimagining Safety.

As students return to school, PEIWI is pleased to remind students there are several scholarships offered throughout the year including the two newly named scholarships of \$1,000 each for studies in health and agriculture. Another opportunity is for the Dr. Helen Herring Scholarship for students entering their third year of university. Deadline is September 30 and details on these scholarships are available online at [www.peiwi.ca](http://www.peiwi.ca).

At the onset of the school year, the PEIWI Board of Directors wishes to remind all to stop for school buses with flashing lights and slow down for farm equipment.

Dear WI Members

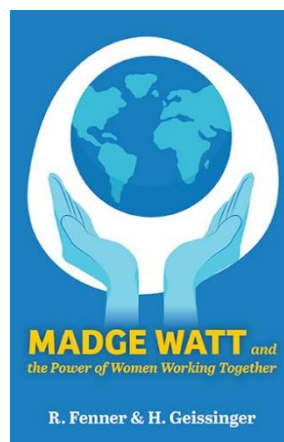
Ruth Fenner and I are happy to tell you that the book we wrote about Madge Watt has been published and is now available. Details about it are at

<https://books.friesenpress.com/store/title/119734000183130006>

Ruth and I agree that my Aunt Madge would want WIs in all of Canada to receive a donation in her memory. Accordingly, I propose to donate 5 paperback copies of the book to your office to sell as a fund-raiser. Our agreement with the printer states that such copies must be sold at, or above, the Canadian list price of \$21.50.

I hope this offer is acceptable to you and your Executive. If so, please confirm the address to which the books should be sent.

In addition, a copy will be given to you for the use of the current Executive and to be kept for those of the future. Reading it will remind them of the members who came before, the work they did, and on whose shoulders we all stand.



I send my best wishes for a successful winter and my hopes that the pandemic will pass away from us soon. Helen Geissinger





## *Greetings from Alberta Women's Institute* submitted by Diane Dammann

We have a Convention planned for Sept 28-29 in person at the Norseman Inn in Camrose. We usually have our conventions there at the end of May but nothing has been normal. We will be having a virtual component for those who can not attend. This will be the first time we have tried the live and virtual together. Our AGM last year was on Zoom and went fairly well for a first try. Alberta has some high COVID positive tests so there is a possibility that things might change in a hurry so we have a plan B. Plan B is to go virtual and have our handicraft competition at a slightly later time. There is a charge of \$100 to attend virtually. We have some exciting speakers lined up.

**Dr. Sharon Anderson** will be talking about Family Caregivers: The Backbone of the Healthcare System and Society. A caregiver herself, Sharon has Masters degrees in Community Rehabilitation and Disability Studies, and Public Health, and a PhD in Human Ecology Aging Studies. She has been conducting the survey we recently forwarded to AWI members on caregivers in Alberta and how COVID has affected them, and may have some early results to share with us.

**Sylvia Wold** is a motivational speaker and will be speaking on "New Beginnings." She has 30 years in public service including 20 as Administrative Manager of Seniors Supportive Housing in Castor. She is also a partner in 5 Directions Consulting, developing programs for Baby Boomer Women who want to be surprised and inspired to participate in prevention focused health decisions.

**Devin Dreesen**, Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, Government of Alberta. A fifth-generation local farm owner and Albertan, he was appointed as Alberta's Minister of Agriculture and Forestry on April 30, 2019. He has a wealth of previous experience in Ottawa where he was a policy advisor to Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz from 2008 to 2015. He has brought a number of new initiatives to Agriculture and Forestry taking over this portfolio

Closet Fashion is a fun event. Participants bring the oldest item in the closet, dressy, sports, outdoor or footwear to be voted on. Virtual attendees may send pictures. This is a fundraiser for the ACWW/FWIC travel fund.





*Saskatchewan Women's Institute,* submitted by Karen Gerwing

Saskatchewan lifted its mask mandate on July 11, which allowed for a more normal summer. The Prairie Lilies WI in Fort Qu'Appelle even managed to have a summer picnic together (see attached picture).

Now there seems to be an increase in COVID cases due to the variant but we are still hoping to gather for our Annual General Meeting in Foam Lake on Monday, October 18 at 10:00 a.m.

Then we can make the draw for our annual quilt raffle which was postponed from May. Extra time to sell more tickets. Virginia Kreklevich has made so many quilts for SWI to raise money for the organization and the Saskatchewan Children's Hospital for over a decade, a wonderful accomplishment.

*Prairie Lilies  
Women's Institute*



# 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.*



September is here, what happened to July and August? I can't keep up with the passage of time. Then on the second and third day of this new month the morning mail brought me two 2022 calendars and renewal notices for Christmas gift subscriptions! Another too early reminder of how "tempus fugit". However September is one of my favourite months, with its clear, sunny, pleasantly warm days, and fresh breezes no humidity. We have started out with windy, heavy rain, but I am sure that will be replaced with the real September days I love.

Digital immigrant that I am, it was an amazing experience to attend the 22<sup>nd</sup> National Convention of our FWIC, followed by the Associated Country Women of the World Area Canada Conference, and then in early August to attend the Women's Institutes of Nova Scotia provincial Convention. All this happened virtually, and my limited "tech savvy" left me full of wonder. This certainly didn't replace the pleasure of meeting in person, but we did meet, see some familiar faces, hear some interesting speakers, and were able to conduct the necessary business. My appreciation goes to all those who were responsible for these virtual meetings to take place, and a special Thanks to those whose term of office in our organization ended with this year's meetings. We are grateful for the dedication they showed with the challenges of the pandemic they have faced.

September is a month of new beginnings. Children and youth are off to school and university (extra special this year because of last year's Covid disruptions). Organizations like our Women's Institutes and community groups of all kinds are planning to start up again, and it is to be hoped that there won't have to be too many restrictions to meeting in person, despite the worrying increase in cases of the Delta variant. The more I hear of how so many of our Women's Institute Branches across Canada have been so creative in coming up with such interesting activities to undertake during these days of restrictions and lock downs the more impressed I become. However, not everyone has been able to do that, and now it is a question of "how do we rekindle" our well known W.I. enthusiasm and commitment. That is our Fall 2021 challenge.



At the July Convention we had an informative workshop on drafting Resolutions. Recalling that, made me think about our Nova Scotia Convention where we dealt with three excellent Resolutions. One was a Policy change in the By-Laws to allow for virtual Meetings in the event of unforeseen circumstances.

One of the others was on human trafficking and requesting that Government do everything possible to combat this crime. It is sad, and disturbing, that Nova Scotia has a high number of cases. We have thought that human trafficking was something that happened in cities like Halifax and Sydney, not in small towns or rural areas. But how wrong we have been. The other Resolution dealt with the Government implementing an annual basic income which would do so much to combat the far too high rate of child poverty in our province. Those two Resolutions have been forwarded to our respective Provincial and Federal Governments. But what happens next? We wait for a response. We will no doubt receive an acknowledgement that the Resolution has been received, which might even have an explanation of what has already been done on this issue. And then perhaps we don't do anything more. I know that some of our provinces have been much better than others at continuing to remind the recipients of the Resolution that they are still waiting to hear of some action. That may have to happen more than once.

I am now going to use my own province as an example of what I think we should be doing about the two Resolutions we accepted in August. We have just had an election in Nova Scotia. We are in the midst of a federal election. Soon we will have all new or re-elected MLAs and MPs. Every Branch should forward copies of these Resolutions to their respective elected officials. (For example, my MLA, who also happens to be the new Premier, would hear from six Branches, and who ever becomes the MP on September 20<sup>th</sup> would hear from eight. These are the individuals that we need to give copies of Resolutions we have forwarded to our governments recently and we would appreciate their support. This is also good publicity for the Women's Institutes, making them better known to the decision makers, and it will indicate the issues that are of concern to women living in the rural areas. It will indicate that an organization founded in 1897 to bring about change continues to-day to be voices for change.



*Working for home & country*



# Templeton WI Challenge

submitted by Barbara Taylor, Walk Coordinator

The Templeton Women’s Institute members (St. John’s NL) were issued a challenge to walk as many kilometers as possible during May and June.

Group walks were arranged every week and many walked on their own on other days. As Covid restrictions were still in effect, it was a chance to get together, walk and socialize in an outdoor setting. Different walking trails were chosen each week and members walked whatever distance they could. There was also some sitting on benches and lots of talk along the way.

When the time came to record the total distance walked, seventeen members sent in their kilometers with the total walked being 1530 K. Two members walked 250 kilometers, others walked over 100 and there were various amounts in between.

We took a break during the summer but all agreed we would start up again in September.



## *Just thinking...*

submitted by Holly Hersey, Past-President NBWI

As long as I have been a member I have heard discussion on how to increase our membership. What can we do to get new members, how can we get people to join. I have always said that if we want new members we have to give them a reason to join. The fact that we are an amazing organization isn't enough. They need something more.



This belief was brought to mind recently when my 45 year old niece was visiting from Alberta. She was asking about Women's Institute. What we do, what we have done, what we are currently doing. She was impressed with the list of our past accomplishments. Then she wanted to know but what we are doing now. I told her about some of our recent projects like the Fidget Quilts. I mentioned that FWIC is involved in a project to help stop human trafficking and also some other programs. Then she asked but what were we doing, what could she do to help, how could she help. While we were talking my 23 year old niece stopped in.

When she was asked what would make her want to join the WI, her reply was that if she could make a difference, make the world a better place by joining then she would. She didn't want to go sit at a meeting, drink tea or eat cookies, she wanted something tangible she could do that would make a difference, that would have impact. My other niece agreed. They would be willing to work but they needed a direction, a focus, someone to say this is what needs to be done and this is how to do it. This is what WI can do, this is how WI can make a difference, by providing a focus.

So ladies if you want to increase membership, embrace a cause. Not just any cause, but one where you can get out in the streets or down in the trenches, one where you need to roll up your sleeves and dig in deep, one that will make a difference in your community, your province, your country or the world. something that makes others want to be a part of it. If we can do that we won't need to look for members. They will look for us.

We don't need to increase membership to do great things, we need to do great things and our membership will increase. In closing I give you that famous quote from the movie Field of Dreams

*If you build it,  
(s)he will come*





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

- ➔ Create a cohort of new leaders to create communications about WI's future in Canada.
- ➔ To provide tangible deliverables to the provinces and to clarify direction of WI Canada for the next 20 years

Women's Institute in Canada is struggling to survive. With declining membership there is a noted lack of enthusiasm and 'fear' of what the future will bring. Provincial bodies have recently voted against FWIC increased fees and with the smaller numbers of participants in each jurisdiction there is a sense of 'doom' regarding how we could possibly fulfill our dreams of heightening the awareness of Women's Institute in Canada and working together for worthy causes that will support Canadian citizens for 'home and country'.

Ten modules will be delivered to approximately 45 participants (WI Canada Board and three (3) people from each province). Each module will be structured in the same manner, consisting of intros & introductory activity, information sharing, application of the content, Q & A sessions, and wrap up. Each module is scheduled to last 55 minutes in order that participants can Zoom in without a huge commitment of time and energy.



They will be held on Wednesday evenings at 7pm eastern time. The start date will be November 2021.

Modules to include: 1-Intro to Leadership, 2-Public Speaking and Networking, 3-Communications, 4-History and Structure of WI, 5-Bylaws & Programming of WI, 6-Goal setting in your Branch-SMART Goals, 7-Facilitation Techniques and SWOT applications, 8-Governance and Board participation, 9-Conflict Resolution, 10-Wrap Up Session. Facilitators will include trained and experienced individuals from across Canada, including Board members and volunteers.

The costs for the WI Canada Leadership Modules are completely covered by volunteer presenters and the annual Zoom subscription that WI Canada FWIC subscribes to. Each member of the WI Canada FWIC Board will be eligible to participate and share the leadership modules with members from their respective provinces, thereby creating leadership teams in their provinces that will steer the provincial and national WI groups into the next 20 years. In a nutshell we will all know where we are going and what our roles and responsibilities are to fulfill our destiny.

Be sure to include your name, birthdate, address, Branch particulars, length of time in WI, interests, personal and professional experience, and your hopes for the future of Woman’s Institute. The first three applicants from each province will be considered along with the WI Canada FWIC Board. Future Leadership Training Modules will be supported across Canada, with the hope that the first group of participants will eventually become trainers for the modules across Canada.

If you are interested in participating, or have any questions please send your letter of application or concerns to [angela.sott@bellaliant.net](mailto:angela.sott@bellaliant.net).



## Next Month in WI Connections

- ✓ Another profile of a WI Member
- ✓ Updates from provinces on how they support food banks and families in need across Canada
- ✓ Committee updates
- ✓ Knitting and crocheting poppies

*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](mailto:info@fwic.ca) 519.448.3873

