

Monthly Newsletter for Federated Women's Institutes of Canada

WI Connections

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From the President's desk...

Happy WI Month! February marks 129 years since our organization was founded in 1897—a milestone defined by courage, hope, and unwavering spirit. Imagine those pioneering women, stepping boldly into the unknown, fueled by a fiery desire to create change at a time when women's voices, especially in rural areas, were so often silenced. Think of their dreams—did they envision a future where their movement would grow beyond their small communities, igniting hearts across the province, sweeping across Canada, and reaching around the world?



On February 19, 1897, these trailblazing women made a bold proclamation—they formed a Department of Domestic Economy affiliated with the Farmers' Institute of South Wentworth, laying the first stones of what would become the world's first Women's Institute. Linda Ambrose, in her book, *For Home and Country: The Centennial History of the Women's Institutes of Ontario*, recalls that their purpose was clear and profound: to share vital knowledge about domestic economy—covering everything from household design and sanitation to the nutritional value of foods, proper clothing, and fuel. Their goal was to uplift their homes, nurture healthier families, and elevate the morals and well-being of their communities. These courageous women soon realized the power of their collective voice and driven by a passion to spread their message, began writing articles and sharing their insights in various agricultural publications—small acts that sparked a ripple effect.

Their dedication, combined with the government's push for rural development, fueled a rising wave of growth, transforming ideals into tangible action. Over time, what were once simple principles evolved into a steadfast mission focused on personal growth, leadership, and community service. Behind every achievement were the treasured friendships—those bonds forged and rekindled—that fueled their unwavering dedication. The tradition of recording farm histories and community stories through Tweedsmuir Histories stands as a testament to their legacy—a living reminder of the importance of history, connection, and shared purpose.

Today, we carry the torch of these noble ideals. What the Women's Institutes stand for—the spirit of unity, education, and community—remains as critical and powerful as it was 129 years ago. Our past inspires us; our future depends on it. Let's celebrate this journey of passion, resilience, and hope that continues to transform lives—today, tomorrow, and for generations to come.

Hope you will join us on Feb 19 to celebrate our organization!

Till next time,

Lynn



FWIC is pleased to share that PEIWI has issued an invitation to host the FWIC Convention in 2027, which the board unanimously accepted. Watch for more information in the coming months.

Thank You So Much for All the Donations to FWIC & AHHH!

These were donations from the past two months.

Lynn Johnson	FWIC Donation	\$1,057.00	Pampered Chef
Anonymous	AHHH Donation	\$5,000.00	
Evelyn Peck	FWIC Donation		
Nancy Birss	FWIC Donation		
Irene Robillard	AHHH Donation		
Vittoria Women's Institute	AHHH Donation		
Mary Derbyshire	AHHH Donation		
Hamilton Area WI	AHHH Donation		
Anne Dunn	AHHH Donation		
Westover Women's Institutes	AHHH Donation		



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Highlighting Provincial Women's Institutes Advocacy work for 2026, Submitted by Shelly Simrose and Susan Hoszouski, BCWI

The first Provincial WI to be highlighted is the BC WI, which advocates for health care within its province.

Over the past few years, the British Columbia WI and many of its individual branches have been advocating very diligently on various health care issues. This includes many resolutions regarding requesting a dental assistant plan for seniors over 65, and the federal government has implemented a universal dental plan for low-income seniors and families with children under 12. Also, they advocated for every emergency room in BC hospitals to have rape kits and trained staff to use them. This led BCWI to establish the Forensic Nursing Bursary Fund in 2022 to help educate nurses to address the employment gap. To date, BCWI has awarded 31 \$1000.00 bursaries!!! We are very proud of this effort.

We also advocated for gene editing seeds and lack of labeling, lack of family doctors in BC and across Canada, and for grassroots solutions in each community. A couple of municipalities have opened municipality-run medical clinics. A Nanaimo resident, Todd Maffin, has successfully lobbied to recruit medical staff from the USA to practice in Canada. Check out <http://HEALTHCAREINFUSION.ORG> for information. Several WI Branches award bursaries to graduating students entering further education in a health care field.

Advocacy work for better health care builds stronger families and communities and benefits people of all ages. Advocacy for better health care will remain a top priority for BCWI and many of our branches.

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WI Day Feb 19, 2026

Virtual Event

FWIC/ WI Canada

FWIC WI Canada will celebrate the founding of the Women's Institutes on February 19, 2025, beginning at 7 pm Eastern time.

The evening's program will share the "Stories that shape us".

You are encouraged to register and receive the Zoom link in your mailbox at registrations@fwic.ca.

However, the Zoom link is posted here; you are welcome to share it with WI members and anyone interested in WI. Please do not post the Zoom link in a public place.

Federated Women's Institute Canada is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Celebrate WI Day 2026

Time: Feb 19, 2026, 07:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81108209322?pwd=fYlcnli6ZiTz6Eg86nbMID6v2n12G7.1>

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Building Tomorrow Together, Submitted by
President Cornwall Confederation Branch, Past President, PEIWI
Sheila Gallant

EMBRACING DIVERSITY

As immigration continues to increase in Canada, more people from around the world are choosing to make this country their home, establishing themselves here and enriching our shared culture.

As an organization of women supporting women, we welcome newcomers into our branches, bringing invaluable richness and diversity to our learning. The exchange of perspectives, experiences, and traditions enhances our collective understanding in truly limitless ways.

Our branch was founded on the involvement of international women within our province. Over the years, these women have generously shared their food, traditions, cultures, histories, crafts, and stories from their home countries. Through them, we have learned about Africa, Mexico, China, and the Bahamas. Building on this foundation, our branch is planning to develop partnerships with cultural communities across the province to create an educational series led by our Branch. Our goal is to extend these learning opportunities to the wider community, fostering knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of diverse cultures.



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Ultimately, this initiative seeks to create an atmosphere of acceptance and sensitivity toward those who have chosen Canada as their new home.

These women demonstrate a strong desire to give back to their communities, reflecting the welcome and acceptance they have received in Canada. They bring fresh ideas, perspectives, and approaches—different from our own, yet equally effective. Working alongside them is both rewarding and inspiring.

Many newcomers, whether arriving for work or other reasons, are seeking connection, friendship, and a supportive network. I encourage you to reach out to newcomers in your communities and invite them to join your branch. The opportunities for learning and growth are truly endless.

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Celebrating WI Month February 2026

How is your branch, district, or province planning to celebrate?

Why not share your plans, take pictures, and send them to FWIC so they can be included in the March issue of the *WI Connections*? Please send to wiconnections@gmail.com

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Finding Voice, Submitted by Angela Scott, President-Elect, FWIC

Change doesn't start with authority — it starts with engagement.

What does that really mean? If I have a problem, the chances are slim that government alone can solve it. Governments already carry many responsibilities. But when I begin a conversation, engage with others in my community, and learn more by asking simple, thoughtful questions, I often come much closer to a solution.

Last month I wrote about finding our voice and understanding advocacy. This month—let's put it into action.

Advocacy begins when we shift the question from “*Why won't they act?*” to ... “*What can we do?*” This shift may seem subtle, but it is powerful. It moves us from frustration to possibility, from complaint to purpose.

When we are frustrated by an issue, it is natural to focus on what others should do.



They should listen.
They should fix it.
They should care more.

While these feelings are understandable, they can leave us feeling powerless, waiting for change rather than helping to shape it.

Often, the most effective actions are also the simplest. A thoughtful conversation can open understanding. A well-written letter can draw attention to an overlooked issue. A meeting—even a small one—can create momentum. And when voices come together, a collective message carries far more weight than any individual concern.

Bringing Voices Together

For 129 years, Women’s Institutes have brought voices together to create change and improve living conditions. In earlier days, members wrote letters to clearly describe issues and propose solutions. That approach still works today.

I use a simple structure when writing a letter. After the proper salutation, I create three short paragraphs:

- Paragraph 1 Name the issue.
- Paragraph 2 Describe why it matters.
- Paragraph 3 Offer a call to action—an invitation to learn more or to begin a conversation.

The purpose of the letter is not to demand answers, but to raise awareness and open the door to engagement. It may feel old-fashioned, but I have yet to find a more effective approach. Typed or handwritten letters are still perceived as “official” correspondence and are often taken seriously within organizations. But...E-Mail works too.

Action does not need to be dramatic or confrontational to matter. Intentional conversations and ideas, taken consistently and together, build credibility and confidence. Remember – Straightforward and Unafraid!

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Phenomenal Two Letter Word! This is SOOO Clever! Submitted by Miriam Lank, Past-President PEI WI

I'm sure you will enjoy this. I never knew one word in the English language that can be a noun, verb, adj, adv, prep. UP

Read until the end ... You'll laugh.

This two-letter word in English has more meanings than any other two-letter word, and that word is UP. It is listed in the dictionary as an [adv], [prep], [adj], [n] or [v].

It's easy to understand UP, meaning toward the sky or at the top of the list, but when we awaken in the morning, why do we wake UP?

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At a meeting, why does a topic come UP? Why do we speak UP, and why are the officers UP for election (if there is a tie, it is a toss UP), and why is it UP to the secretary to write UP a report?

We call UP our friends, brighten UP a room, polish UP the silver, warm UP the leftovers and clean UP the kitchen. We lock UP the house and fix UP the old car.

At other times, this little word has a real special meaning. People stir UP trouble, line UP for tickets, work UP an appetite, and think UP excuses.

To be dressed is one thing, but to be dressed UP is special.

And this UP is confusing: A drain must be opened UP because it is blocked UP.

We open UP a store in the morning, but we close it UP at night. We seem to be pretty mixed UP about UP!

To be knowledgeable about the proper uses of UP, look UP the word. It takes UP almost 1/4 of the page and can add UP to about 30 definitions.

If you are UP to it, you might try building UP a list of the many ways UP is used. It will take UP a lot of your time, but if you don't give UP, you may wind UP with (UP to) a hundred or more.

When it threatens to rain, we say it is clouding UP. When the sun comes out, we say it is clearing UP.

When it rains, it soaks UP the earth. When it does not rain for a while, things dry UP.

One could go on and on, but I'll wrap it UP, for now . . . My time is UP!

Oh... One more thing: What is the first thing you do in the morning and the last thing you do at night? UP!

Did that one crack you UP? Or are you fed UP?

Don't screw UP. Send this on to everyone you look UP in your address book . . . Or not it's UP to you. Now, I'll shut UP!

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Health Matters, Submitted by Shelly Simrose, BCWI President

This Report was shared by a member of the Sinkut WI for the Health Convenor Report in 2023. With Winter upon us and not as much sunlight, we need to focus on our well-being. Thought it was worth sharing again.

Reduce Stress in 10 Minutes and Improve Your Well-Being

More and more US adults are dealing with stress, which can lead to Mental Health Problems. In August 2022, more than 32% of US adults reported having symptoms of anxiety or depression in the last 2 weeks.

1. Taking breaks throughout the day may help relieve stress, ease tensions, or lessen worry. But we often don't take breaks. Even 10 minutes can improve your mental health. Let's commit to taking 10 minutes today to do something for ourselves.

Quick Activities to Improve Your Emotional Well-Being

- Be active—Take a dance break! Lift weights. Do push-ups or sit-ups. Or kick around a soccer ball for a few minutes.
- Close your eyes, take deep breaths, stretch, or meditate.
- Write three things you are grateful for.
- Check in with yourself, take time to ask yourself how you are feeling.
- Laugh! Think of someone who makes you laugh, or the last time you laughed so hard you cried.
- Find an inspiring song or quote and write it down (or screenshot it) so you have it nearby.

Connect with Others to Reduce Stress

Having meaningful relationships can create a sense of belonging. A feeling of being cared for, valued, and supported can help us become more resilient. This is called social connectedness. Connecting with others can help us cope with stress and build resilience. Here are some ways to reduce stress by connecting with others:

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- Reach out to your community, family members, or friends. Talk with someone you trust about your feelings or concerns.
- Make time for cultural, spiritual, or religious activities.
- Volunteer with organizations that interest you. Giving back to others can help you, too.
- Get outside with others, connect with nature, and explore green spaces.

Take Care of Your Body

Staying physically healthy can improve your emotional well-being. Here are some suggestions to improve your health:

- Get vaccinated for the flu each year. Stay up to date on your COVID-19 vaccines and boosters. Find a COVID-19 vaccine location near you on [Vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov)
- Keep up with regular health appointments.
- Eat healthy. Have fruits and vegetables, lean protein, whole grains, and low- or no-fat dairy. Limit foods with unhealthy fats, salt, and added sugars. See [Healthy Eating Tips](#).
- Get enough sleep. Go to bed and wake up at the same time each day to help you sleep better. Adults need 7 or more hours per night.
- Move more and sit less. Every little bit of physical activity helps. Start small and build up to 2 1/2 hours a week. You can break it into smaller amounts of time, such as 20 to 30 minutes a day.
- Limit alcohol intake. Choose not to drink, or drink in moderation on days you drink alcohol. Moderation means having 2 drinks or less a day for men or 1 drink or less for women a day. Find out more at [Drink Less, Be Your Best](#).
- Avoid using illegal drugs or prescription drugs in ways other than prescribed. Don't take someone else's prescription. Substance use help is available.
- Avoid smoking, vaping, and the use of other tobacco products. People can and do quit smoking for good.

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Sustainable Style with Mindful Consumption, Submitted by Brenda Devauld, BCWI

Have you ever wondered how sustainable you really are?

Take the quiz and find out! Answer the questions honestly to get a better idea of where you stand.

1. Before making a purchase, how often do you think about the necessity of the item?
 - a) Always
 - b) Sometimes
 - c) Rarely
 - d) Never
2. Do you research products and brands before buying?
 - a) Always, I want to know everything.
 - b) Usually, but only for bigger purchases.
 - c) Never, I just buy what I see.
3. How often do you consider the environmental impact of your purchases?
 - a) Always, it's a top priority for me.
 - b) Sometimes, especially for bigger purchases.
 - c) Rarely, I tend to focus on price.
 - d) Never, I don't want to think about it.

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- Do you prefer buying second-hand or sustainably made products?
- a) Yes, whenever possible!
 - b) Sometimes, if I come across them.
 - c) Rarely, I usually shop for new,
 - d) No, I prefer brand new products.
5. How often do you think about the social impact of your purchases (like free trade, or workers' rights)?
- a) Always, it guides my decisions.
 - b) Sometimes, I consider it for certain brands.
 - c) Rarely, I focus more on personal benefit.
 - d) Never, it is not something that I think about.
6. Are you aware of your impulse-buying habits?
- a) Yes, I monitor and control them.
 - b) I try to keep it in check.
 - c) Occasionally, but I still give in
 - d) No, I don't think about it.
7. How often do you evaluate your belongings and declutter?
- a) Regularly, I like to keep things minimal.
 - b) Sometimes when I feel it's necessary.
 - c) Rarely, I let things pile up.
 - d) Never, I keep everything I own.
8. Do you go shopping with a list to avoid unnecessary purchases?
- a) Always, I stick to my list.
 - b) Usually, but sometimes I stray.
 - c) Rarely, I often buy on whim.
 - d) Never, I buy whatever catches my eye.
9. How often do you consider repairing items instead of replacing them?
- a) Always, I prefer fixing over buying new.
 - b) Sometimes, depending on the item.
 - c) Rarely, I usually replace them.
 - d) Never, I don't think about it.
10. When you shop, how often do you buy from local businesses?
- a) Always, supporting locals is important to me.
 - b) Sometimes, if it is convenient.
 - c) Rarely, I usually shop at big chains.
 - d) Never, I prefer online or larger retailers.

Scoring Your Results.

Mostly A's (A Mindful Consumer)

You're a very mindful consumer! You make thoughtful choices and consider the impact of purchases on society and the environment.

Mostly B'S (Generally Mindful)

You have a good understanding of mindful consumption but might benefit from being a bit more conscious in some areas.

Mostly C's (Somewhat Mindless)

You're on the right track, but there is room for growth. Consider integrating More mindful practices in your shopping habits.

Mostly D's (Mindless Consumer)

It seems you may not be considering the bigger picture when it comes to shopping. Reflecting on your consumption habits could lead to more conscious decisions.

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Mindful Consumption Day, Burnt Church WI, Blackville, NB, Submitted by Marion Green, Past-President NBWI, FWIC Board Member



On October 16, 2025, Burnt Church W.I. and Blackville W.I. jointly sponsored a "Mindful Consumption Workshop" opened to the public. We had 29 interested ladies attend. This workshop and theme were chosen to promote the three-year National Project of the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada. The materials published in WI Connections, the FWIC YouTube channel, the F.W.I.C. Facebook page, and the NBWI monthly Newsletter were very useful for finding information used at the workshop.

After singing O Canada, the workshop opened with the presentation of the "Sustainable Style Skit," which provided attendees with an overview of the project and discussed the 7 R's of Sustainability. Members of the WI's had a fashion show with clothing either from their closets or from a local resource center. Marilyn McKenna presented on fabric-wrapped baskets and fabric rugs, along with a display of her work. Linda Gallant demonstrated how to make an apron from a man's shirt, quilts from T-shirts and scrap material, and clothing from old patterns, which were on display.



After a couple of quizzes, door prizes, discussions, and thoughts on the day, the singing of God Save the King closed the day. Those attending left with handout materials, full bellies from the delicious food served throughout the day, and smiling faces.



Homestead Report, Submitted by Veronica Boone, Interim Museum Manager WI Connections February 2026

February, the season of love, reflection, and appreciation—a perfect time to visit the homestead. Discover how care, community, and connection formed the heart of daily life in the 1800s and were central components of Adelaide's advocacy. Join us for a tour or for one of our many upcoming events!

To register for our events, book a tour, or inquire about rentals, just contact the homestead!

(519) 448 3873 or info@adelaidehoodless.ca



Legacy Love Letter workshop with Dr. Michael Williams (Registration \$10.00/person)

February 6th, 2:00 – 3:30 pm

Love letters aren't just for poets. In this relaxed, welcoming workshop, you'll learn simple techniques to turn your feelings into words and leave with a love letter that feels honest, personal, and uniquely yours. Come and create a meaningful letter of admiration and appreciation this Valentine's, guided by our writer in residence, Dr. Michael Williams. Registration \$10.00/person

Couples Paint Night with Patti Errygers (18+) (Registration \$20.00/person)

February 13th, 7:00 pm

Grab your romantic partner or closest friend and join us at the homestead this February 13th for an evening of wine and a surprise couple's painting challenge with local artist Patti Errygers. Enjoy snacks, refreshments, and take home your very own Valentine's masterpiece. Canvas, paints, brushes & smocks provided.

Addie's 169th Birthday Tea Celebration/Open House (Registration \$20.00/person)

February 18th 2:00 pm

Celebrate Adelaide's 169th birthday with a special afternoon high tea and open house. Enjoy classic teas, sweet and savoury treats, and the chance to explore the museum while honoring more than a century and a half of history, community, and stories. *Limited seating available, contact the homestead for tickets & more information*

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Valentine Mocktail

Ingredients

- ½ cup fresh raspberries
- 1 TBSP granulated sugar
- 1 TBSP lemon juice, freshly squeezed preferably
(can substitute pink lemonade frozen concentrate)
- 1 pint of raspberry sherbert
- 3 cups sparkling berry lemonade



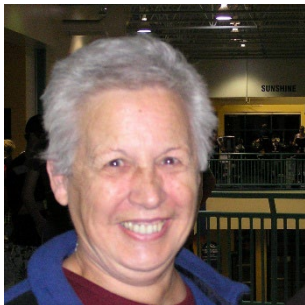
Instructions

1. Combine fresh raspberries, granulated sugar, and lemon juice in a bowl, and mash them together with a fork until you have a berry puree.
2. Place a generous spoonful of puree at the bottom of 6 glasses. Decorative glasses are the best for a festive Valentine's drink. Top with a small scoop of raspberry sherbert and fill the cups to the brim with sparkling berry lemonade. Garnish with a few more fresh berries and/or a mint leaf. Enjoy!

If a mocktail is not for you, just add an ounce of raspberry vodka, plain vodka, or tequila.

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



On September 1st, 1939, the day World War II was declared, the SS Athenia departed Glasgow bound for Montreal. After picking up passengers in Liverpool and Belfast, she headed out into the open ocean. However, at 7.30 pm that evening off the coast of Ireland, she was mistaken for a merchant ship and was torpedoed with the loss of 93 passengers and 14 crew. The ship took 14 hours to sink, but as she listed, it became very difficult to release the lifeboats. Among the survivors, however, were Susan and William Stewart, who had been visiting family in Scotland and were on their way home to Peace River in

northern Alberta.

At that time, Susan was President of the Alberta Women's Institutes and was on her way home to attend both the AWI Convention and the FWIC Board meeting to be held in October. She was able to attend both events and no doubt shared their story with those present. Unfortunately, we have no details on where the survivors were taken or how long it took for them to return to their home, but I imagine, having been torpedoed already, the voyage home must have been extremely nerve-racking, wondering if it could happen again. It is almost impossible to imagine coping with such a sudden and devastating disaster, which would, of course, include the loss of all their clothes other than what they were wearing, no doubt souvenirs of their visit to family and friends, and possibly even photographs of their visit. The wreck was discovered in 2017.

Both Susan and her husband had been born and educated in Scotland. She had received her MA from the University of Glasgow and had done postgraduate work in France. Her husband, William, was a Police Magistrate. After their marriage in 1913, they came directly to Lesser Slave Lake in northern Alberta and then to Peace River Crossing, 300 miles from the nearest railway. It is said she had many stories to tell about pioneer life in those days and that she greatly admired the Indigenous people. They had two children, both of whom died in infancy from drinking unpasteurized milk, giving her a great deal in common with Adelaide Hoodless.

Having joined the Peace River Women's Institute in 1919, she attended her first AWI Convention in 1921 when the first FWIC Board met in Edmonton. Over the years, she held many other offices in AWI, including president from 1937 to 1941, along with committee work for FWIC. She also donated a silver cup for the branch in her area that had the most points in the local WI handicraft show. During 1943-44, she served in the German Division of the Censorship Department in Ottawa, and on her return to Peace River, was awarded an FWIC Life Membership by her branch (in those days, FWIC Life Memberships could be awarded by branches).

In 1947, she and her husband moved to Victoria, BC, where he died suddenly in 1950. As there were no WI branches in the area at that time, she joined other organizations but never lost her interest in Women’s Institutes. After her death in 1979, she was buried in Peace River Cemetery. Because there were no family members, District I of AWI raised funds by raffling a quilt made by one of their members for a headstone, which was unveiled in the presence of local members. There is an annual award given in her name to a student at the Grande Prairie Regional College, Fairview Campus.

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Environment, Submitted by Margie Taylor, President, WINS

How do our fashion choices impact the environment?

When you buy a new cotton T-shirt, do you ever wonder how it came from a cotton field to your wardrobe? Behind every piece of clothing is a complex journey involving multiple countries, thousands of workers, and a supply chain that creates a garment from raw materials to finished product, including sourcing, manufacturing, distribution, and sales. It connects millions of workers, multiple industries, and every single one of us as consumers. Did you know that producing a single cotton T-shirt requires approximately 2700 litres of water, which is enough water for one person to drink for two and one-half years!

So, why should we care? By understanding where our clothes come from and the process behind making the garment, we can make better choices that support workers, protect the planet, and reduce waste. Once a garment has been purchased and worn, it is usually discarded within a year, especially fast-fashion pieces. Some are donated, but a huge percentage ends up in landfills or shipped to second-hand markets, with only 1% of textiles actually recycled into new clothing.

As consumers, we need to be aware of how our choices impact the environment and shift our thinking. The next time you are shopping, take a moment to think about who made the garment, what impact it had on the planet, and where it will go when you’re done wearing it.

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Marie Kenny, ACWW Area Canada President

Greetings Everyone,

As I write this ACWW Update, we are experiencing a “snow day” here on PEI. Schools in both the English and French Public-School Systems are closed; Holland College and the University of PEI are closed; and Government Offices are on delay, with further updates to come later this morning. We received approximately 27 cm of snow overnight, so there is digging out to do. I love the snow, and when the shovelling is done, there is the fantastic promise of a cross-country ski. I am excited to put on my skis and head out across the fields to enjoy the beauty of the season. We should be thankful that the snow we are experiencing now also helps protect and retain soil moisture, which is critical as spring planting begins.



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Agriculture and Food production are an important part of ACWW Projects and Advocacy work. Here is an ACWW Agriculture Project Snapshot.

1 in 3 people face food insecurity. In two-thirds of the world, women are more likely than men to struggle to eat daily. We need genuine change in our systems and focus on more equitable control over food systems. Food and agriculture production systems worldwide are facing unprecedented challenges from climate change. Without action, this will lead to unpredictable growing seasons, crop failures, reduced soil health, biodiversity loss, and increased hunger and food insecurity.

Small-scale subsistence farmers in Africa, Asia, and South America are disproportionately affected by climate change, increasingly unpredictable weather patterns, and a higher risk of drought, resulting in poorer harvests and reduced income.

Women account for 48% of agricultural employment across low-income countries, fulfilling vital roles in managing natural resources and food production. Despite their critical role in the global food system, women face disproportionate challenges compared to rural men; they are more likely to be food-insecure, lack access to land, resources, and market information, and tend to have less decision-making power.

ACWW is committed to promoting sustainable, Climate-Smart Agriculture through small-scale project funding. Climate-Smart Agriculture helps farmers respond effectively to climate change and adapt by selecting Indigenous seed varieties for drought-resistant crops, building irrigation systems, using rainfall forecasting, and harvesting rainwater.

ACWW members work collectively to drive change; we do this in numerous ways at the local, national, and international levels. Engaging the members' collective voice through resolutions is one of the driving forces behind ACWW's work. The ACWW advocacy work links resolutions to the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals). Zero Hunger is SDG 2: Ending hunger. This SDG focuses on achieving food security and improved nutrition, and on promoting sustainable agriculture.

The United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all by 2030. The 17 SDGs were adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015 as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. They provide a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, recognizing that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand in hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth, all while tackling climate change and preserving our oceans and forests.

In this, the International Year of the Woman Farmer, ACWW wants to shed a spotlight on the women farmers across our membership. So, let's share our stories. If you have a story or know someone engaged in the food security system, please let me know or share it with Casey at the Central Office.

I recently received an interesting email that shared a bit of history where women were at the forefront of food sustainability. It was both fascinating and inspiring; I invite you to check out the documentary: "We Lend a Hand," The Forgotten Story of Ontario Farmerettes. This documentary film tells the extraordinary story of a contingent of 40,000 teenage girls who volunteered on Canadian farms and helped to win the Second World War. Links: [instagram.com/welendahand.film](https://www.instagram.com/welendahand.film) or [Facebook.com/welendahand.documentary](https://www.facebook.com/welendahand.documentary)

As we continue the countdown to the Triennial World Conference in Ottawa, April 26-May 1st, please review the Conference Information document on Resolutions and Recommendations in preparation for voting in business sessions. This is a significant part of our work together. Delegation leads, and voting delegates, your voice is important.

Also, please keep in mind the Conference Charity Drive: Supporting Local Women. Whenever and wherever we convene for the Triennial World Conference, we strive to leave a positive legacy and impact on the host location and community. For the 31st Triennial World Conference, the Charity Drive is collecting Feminine Hygiene Products for women and girls. Members are asked to bring contributions to support local women. These contributions will be donated to women's shelters and the Ottawa Food Bank, ensuring they reach women most in need. Here is a suggested list of items to be collected: • Sanitary Pads - reusable or disposable • Tampons • Wash Cloths • Bars of soap (unscented) • Deodorant • Underwear • Sanitation wipes • Hair Shampoo • Body lotion (unscented). We are grateful for all contributions. Please ensure anything you bring is new and sealed in original/ appropriate packaging for hygiene. If you would like to contribute but don't have easy access or will struggle to travel with contributions, there are several shops in the mall next to the hotel/conference venue where you could purchase suitable items to donate. Thank you for your support.

Congratulations to FWIO President Cheryl Sullivan on a very interesting and inspiring AGM. Thank you for inviting me to attend (virtually) and bring a greeting and update from ACWW. Best wishes to you, your board, and officers as you continue to work for change to make families and communities safer across Ontario.

To all ACWW Societies across our Nation, if I can be of assistance at any time, please email me at canada@acww.uk.org or call me at 902-330-9767. Together we are Stronger!

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Stories to Inspire and Connect Women, Submitted by Moranda van Geest, Elgin WI, NB

From Seed to “What Have I Done?”

Who would have thought that *this* would turn into *this*?

It feels like a miracle when tiny seeds become strong, thriving plants—until those full-grown plants turn into your August nightmare.

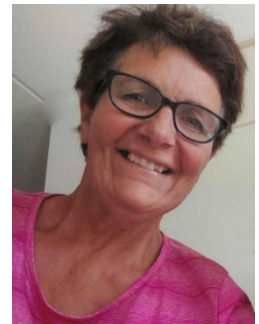
When we plant the garden, we believe in planting *enough*. Enough for winter. Everything—and I mean everything—must be canned, frozen, pickled, fermented, or dried. You name it, we do it. Gardeners dream of the bounty ahead: baskets of peas, cucumbers, tomatoes, and corn. Pole beans, black beans, broad beans, green beans, wax beans—you get the drift.

At first, it's pure joy. Each tiny seed becomes a plant covering two square feet of garden, and suddenly the fruits of your labour are everywhere. You look forward to that first cucumber, the first zucchini. Finally, you pick one, take a bite, and it's nothing short of a mouth-watering delight.

Until that delight turns you into a kitchen slave.

One zucchini becomes two. Two become six...seven...until the once-beloved zucchini becomes a mountain. Suddenly, you're making zucchini bread, zucchini salad, zucchini soup—zucchini for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Your husband doesn't dare complain, fearing the next zucchini might come flying straight at his head. Neighbours mysteriously disappear when they see you coming with a basket.

And if it were only zucchini.



The cabbages are begging to be harvested, their leaves as large as hats. Cabbage rolls grow to the size of dinner plates—Canadian cabbage rolls, Korean cabbage rolls, Chinese cabbage rolls, hot, cold, and spicy. The kitchen becomes a disaster zone. You're not sure whether to grab a broom or a shovel. Burning the place down briefly crosses your mind.

Finally, when the cabbages, corn, beets, carrots, tomatoes, leeks, and onions are done...when the garden is empty, and the shelves and freezer are full...you sit down and reflect on a very busy summer. You're not sure you'll ever do this again next year

So, you relax, take a deep breath...
...and reach for next year's seed catalogue.

Phew. What a job. I'd better start planning for next year.

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Call for Stories: 100 Voices Across Canada

The Federated Women's Institutes of Canada continues to invite members from coast to coast to share their voices as part of our *100 Voices: Stories That Shaped Us* project.



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Every story matters — from the traditions carried forward to moments of friendship, learning, or leadership that shaped your journey with WI. These stories reflect the heart of who we are: women growing, supporting, and strengthening communities together.

During the virtual WI Day celebration, **we will hear from several storytellers** who will share their personal stories.

If you haven't written yours yet, there is still time. All stories received will be shared over the next year, with the goal of compiling them into a single book to be available at the 2027 National Convention. Whether you've been a member for decades or joined recently, your voice can inspire others and help us honour over a century of women's contributions.

Together, we'll celebrate *100 Voices* — the spirit of WI, told in your own words.

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Let's Put the Fun in FUNdraising, Submitted by Donna Henderson, AWI Rep to FWIC Board



The fundraising committee is pleased to report the proceeds from the The November Pampered Chef FUNdraiser is \$ 1,057. Thank you to all who ordered, and I hope you are enjoying your products.



Get Ready for our next FWIC FUNdraiser.
April 1st to 30th will be Aloette month.

NOMINATIONS FOR FWIC NATIONAL AWARDS

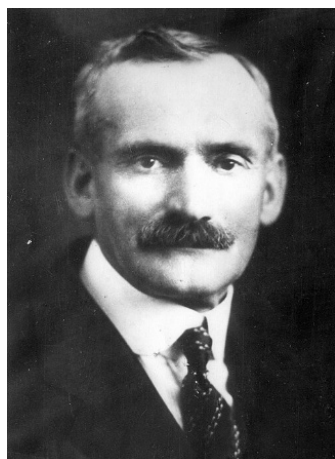
ADELAIDE HUNTER HOODLESS CANADIAN WOMAN OF THE YEAR: Nominations are open for the AHH Canadian Woman of the Year and close on **March 31, 2026**.



Criteria:

1. Profile (max 750 words)
 - Exhibits qualities of Adelaide Hoodless
 - Leadership
 - Gives back to the community (locally, provincially, nationally)
 - Inspires others
 2. Two Letters of Recommendation (individual or organization – not from Nominator)
 3. Completed Application with Nominee's Photo & Nominator's Contact Info
 4. Women's Institute Involvement (not necessarily a member)
 5. Canadian citizen or permanent resident
- Drop off, mail, courier, or email (info@fwic.ca) your completed nomination form and the nominee's picture to:

Federated Women's Institutes of Canada
359 Blue Lake Road, PO Box 209
St. George, Ontario NOE 1N0



ERLAND LEE AWARDS

This prestigious award, presented by the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada, is given to a man who most exemplifies the qualities of Erland Lee that led to the founding of the Women's Institute.

Criteria:

1. Nominations can come from the branch, district/county, provincial, or national level. Each province is entitled to one nomination per year, except Ontario.
 2. Specifics of the nominee's contribution to Women's Institutes must be included with the nomination letter and forwarded to the provincial office for approval.
 3. Once approved by the provincial office, the name will be sent to the national office. A cheque for \$15.00 per certificate, payable to Federated Women's Institutes of Canada (FWIC) from the nominating branch, must accompany the nomination.
- Nominations for the Erland Lee Awards are open and close on **March 31, 2026**.