

Monthly Newsletter for Federated Women's Institutes of Canada

WI Connections



Earth Day, April 22, 2026



Earth Day Circular Economy video.

This year, FWIC will celebrate Earth Day by learning about the Circular Economy.

Join us as WI member Monica Rivers, owner & founder of Rooted Gatherings, shares what a Circular Economy is, why it is important to our communities, and how we can become part of one.

The presentation will be available starting April 22 on the FWIC WI Canada YouTube channel. Visit our channel and look for the

From the President's desk...

Spring marks a season of renewal and flourishing growth, and it is the month in which we celebrate Earth Day. Earth Day 2026 offers us an opportunity to reflect on how our everyday choices shape the world around us. For members of the Women's Institutes, sustainability is not new—it is something we have practised for generations through care, creativity, and common sense. FWIC's Sustainable Style Project builds on this proud tradition by highlighting the role we can play in today's circular economy.



FWIC's Earth Day event will explain what a circular economy is and how we can become one. (Details in this newsletter). A circular economy encourages us to move away from a "use and discard" mindset and towards one where resources are valued, reused, repaired, and shared. Long before the term existed, WI members were living it—mending clothes, repurposing fabrics, swapping items, and choosing quality that lasts. Sustainable style is simply these values applied to modern challenges.

The fashion industry is one of the world's largest sources of waste, but our choices matter. By extending the life of our clothing, buying second-hand, supporting ethical and local makers, and caring properly for what we own, we help keep materials in use for longer and reduce pressure on the planet. These actions are at the heart of a circular economy and of WI values.

Earth Day is also about community. Clothing swaps, sewing circles, skill-sharing sessions, and conversations about mindful consumption bring people together while making a positive environmental impact. Sustainability does not require perfection—only willingness, curiosity, and collective effort.

As Women's Institutes members, we are proud to lead by example, blending tradition with innovation. This Earth Day, let us celebrate the small, thoughtful actions that add up to real change—and continue stitching sustainability, community, and care for the planet into everything we do.

Wishing everyone a Happy Easter,
Lynn

March 2026 Donations	
Langton Women's Institute, ON	AHHH Donation
Shanna Lewis, ON	In memory of Gerry & Brigit Morin
Simcoe South-Kempfenfeld Dist WI.	AHHH Donation
PUCLC Women's Institute (Port Union, Catalina, Little Catalina Women's Institute) NL	AHHH Donation
Heather Roe	In memory of Margaret Killeen
Wentworth District WI.ON	AHHH Donation
Coningsby WI, Ontario.	AHHH Donation



Highlights from the FWIC/WI Canada Board Meeting – March 23, 2026



Theme: Together We Rise!

VISION STATEMENT	PURPOSE STATEMENT	OBJECTIVES
Fostering a future where every woman thrives and makes a meaningful impact	A national united voice of women promoting family, community, and personal development through learning and friendship	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To provide a united national voice for all Women's Institutes of Canada 2. To initiate national programs and provide resource material. 3. To provide a medium of intercommunication among the units of the Federation

FWIC April Fundraiser: The Aloette Fundraiser is now available. Thank you to Sharon Hofman for providing a percentage of sales back to FWIC. Here is the link to view the catalogue

<https://ziniy.com/aloette-catalogs/aloette-catalog-2024-english>. To place an order call or text Sharon at 519 998 9382 or email her at aloettewithsharon@gmail.com. She can also be reached through messenger.

Feb 19 WI Day: Thank you to all who participated in the WI Day on Feb 19. If you missed the event, you can enjoy hearing the “WI Stories that Shape Us” on the FWIC WI Canada YouTube Channel. Look for the FWIC crest.

Earth Day Recording of “The Circular Economy” will be aired on April 22, 2026: This year FWIC will share a video on The Circular Economy presented by Nova Scotia WI member, Monica Rivers. Monica is the founder and owner of Rooted Gatherings. Monica will share what a circular economy is, its importance to our communities and how we can be part of one.

FWIC AGM: The AGM will be held on **Tuesday, July 7 at 7pm ET**. There is no cost to attend, however, donations of \$25 or more will receive a charitable tax receipt. Reports are to be submitted by June 16, 2026. More details will be available in April.

FWIC Convention Pin Competition: The competition to design a pin for the 24th National Convention is now open. Details are available in the April WI Connections.

Nominating Committee for 2027: The nominating committee has been established to receive names of provincial representatives for 2027-2030 and for the president-elect position. For those interested in the president-elect position individuals must have served as a FWIC board member in the preceding last two triennium (2018-2021 and 2021-2024).

Reminder: Adelaide Hunter Hoodless Canadian Woman of the Year 2026 and the Erland Lee Awards: This is a reminder that the Canadian Woman of the Year applications and the Erland Lee applications are due **March 31, 2026**. Details are on the website.

Next Meeting of the Board of Directors: Monday, April 20, 2026, at 6 pm ET.

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

MARY STEWART COLLECT RELEVANCE AND MEANING



The Mary Stewart Collect is a famous 1904 prayer or poem written by American educator, women's suffrage activist, and government official, Mary Stewart (1876-1943). Officially known as the "Collect for Club Women," it is widely used by women's institutes and service organizations globally as a closing prayer or creed to focus on kindness, non-prejudice, and greatness.

Who was Mary Stewart?

Mary was born in Ohio and raised in Colorado, USA. She was a teacher, principal of Longmont High School (Colorado), and Dean of Women at the University of Montana. She was actively involved in the Women's Institutes (WI), the General Federation of Women's Clubs, and the fight for women's suffrage. She worked for the U.S. Department of Labor and as assistant director of education in the Office of Indian Affairs.

The Mary Stewart Collect was written when she was a high school principal; the poem was intended as a prayer to "stir the better impulses" of women working together. Early copies were sometimes signed with a pen name, "Mary Stuart".

Why say the Mary Stewart Collect?

- It Fosters Unity and Shared Purpose by helping to create a sense of oneness, reminding people that while "little things" cause differences, in the "big things of life, we are one".
- It encourages Personal Growth in Character: The prayer acts as a meditation for daily life, petitioning for guidance to move beyond pettiness, fault-finding, and self-seeking.
- It encourages expansion of Character. It explicitly asks for the capacity to be "large in thought, in word, in deed" and serves as a reminder "not to forget to be kind".
- It encourages Calmness and Action. It petitions for the ability to "take time for all things" and to grow "calm, serene, gentle" while prompting individuals to act on better impulses, "straightforward and unafraid".

- It encourages Broad Perspectives. It calls for looking past prejudices and self-interest to meet others face-to-face with openness.

As the Women's Institute organization moves through the 20th Century, questions have been raised among branches as to whether or not the Mary Stewart College should be repeated at branch meetings, district conventions and conferences. There are many benefits to make the collect part of your organization as outlined above as well as ensuring meetings remain professional, productive and friendly. Some branches across Canada do not repeat the collect every meeting but rather take a thought from the Collect and discuss it as a "check in" at the beginning of the meeting. Every new member joining a branch should have a knowledge of the Mary Stewart Collect, which acts as a Terms of Reference for the running of branch meetings. It is so easy to repeat the collect without thinking of the words you say. It can become a repetitive ritual that can lose its meaning. It is important when the words are repeated that they are meant from the heart. The adoption and continuance of the collect in the Women's Institute is a factor in the longevity and resilience of the organization. Whether you repeat the collect at every meeting or take an opportunity to remember it in other ways, it will stand by your group as you continue to work for home and country.

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The “Design a Pin Competition” is now open for the 24th National Convention.

The Convention Pin Design Competition invites WI Members to create an original pin design that reflects the following:

- the triennial theme of “**Together We Rise**”
- 24th National FWIC Convention or year 2027,
- Held in Prince Edward Island.

The winning design will be produced as the official commemorative pin for the convention.

Eligibility:

- Open to all Canadian Women's Institutes members

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- Individual submissions only
- Each participant may submit up to two (2) designs

Design Requirements

- Format & Size
 - Pin size: Maximum 1 inch (50mm) in height or width
 - Shape: Open (square, rectangle or circle)
- Technical Specifications
 - Submit artwork as a sketch in PDF or PNG Format
 - Maximum 6 colors
- Show
 - FWIC crest and WI Canada crest
 - Year 2027
 - Name or symbol for PEI
 - Theme

Send your entry to info@fwic.ca on or before January 4, 2027.

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Sustainable Style with Mindful Consumption - Celebrating Our Home, Some Amazing Facts, submitted by Brenda Deveau

April is Earth Month, and it is a great time to look at this amazing planet that is our home. We all see the things that need to be fixed, but sometimes it does us good to look at just how beautiful the earth really is, and how fortunate we are, and how we do need to protect it.

Did You Know?

- Earth is home to more than 8.7 million species of plants and animals. Each one plays a unique role in the balance of nature.
- Each species contributes to the interconnected web of life. Biodiversity ensures food security, clean water, and disease resistance.
- Scientists have identified and named approximately 350,000 to 400,000 different species of plants on Earth.
- About half of the world's oxygen comes from the oceans, primarily through phytoplankton. These tiny organisms are vital for life on Earth.
- Our planet boasts stunning natural wonders, like the Grand Canyon, Great Barrier Reef, and Mount Everest, showcasing the beauty of geology and biodiversity.
- Ecosystems can recover from disturbances. For example, forests can regrow after wildfires, demonstrating nature's resistance.

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- Earth is the only planet in our solar system known to have liquid water on its surface. Water is essential for life as we know it.
- About 96.5% of all Earth's water is held in the Oceans.
- Only about 3% of all water on Earth is fresh water. More than 68% of the Earth's freshwater is held in the ice caps and glaciers, about 30% is stored underground, and about 1.2% is surface water.
- Earth is home to diverse human cultures and languages, each contributing to the rich tapestry of human experience and understanding.

There is so much to be thankful for, and Earth Day helps mobilize millions of people every year to better understand and protect our planet. It is our responsibility to ensure that we each do our best to preserve our planet's biodiversity and protect its oceans and freshwater supplies. Education is key and something we can all do.

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100 Voices: The Stories That Shape Us

We are writing a book—with your stories. This project invites WI Members to contribute their voices in a meaningful and lasting way, creating a collection that honours both the ordinary and the extraordinary moments of the Women's Institutes that shape our lives. By sharing these stories, we are preserving our history, strengthening our connections, and ensuring that the knowledge and experiences of women continue to be recognized, valued, and passed forward.

100 Voices is a storytelling project that began last fall. It gathers the real-life experiences of WI women in our communities—stories shaped by family, work, resilience, creativity, and everyday life. It is a way of capturing what often goes unrecorded: the quiet leadership, practical wisdom, and lived experiences that define who we are. Each voice adds to a larger picture, reflecting not only individual journeys but the shared strength and character of rural and community life across generations.

Please forward your write-ups to president-elect@fwic.ca. They should be about 4-5 paragraphs long. One picture, ideally of the author to go with them would be ideal. I will also need your full name, address, phone number, and email address. If you are sending the information in a printed format (not via email), please send it to Angela Scott, 204 Ivey Road, Limestone, NB E7N 2N4 506-277-6340

Deadline is September 30, 2026

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Ground Beef & Bacon Gnocchi Soup, Submitted by Deborah Barrett, President MWI

Ingredients

- 2 tsp olive oil (omit if adding bacon)
- 1 lb ground beef
- 1/4 to 1/2 cup diced bacon, optional (amount depends on your preference)
- 1 large onion, diced (about 3 cups)
- 2 C celery stalks, diced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 – 28 oz canned tomatoes
- 4 diced carrots, diced
- 8 C beef broth or 2 cans beef consommé
- 3 tsp salt (if broth or consommé is unsalted)
- 1/2 tsp pepper
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 Tbsp Italian Seasoning (can substitute with spaghetti sauce seasoning)
- 2 – 3 Tbsp parsley
- 1 – 12 oz bag of gnocchi



Directions

1. Heat olive oil in a pot (use oil only if not using bacon).
2. Brown ground beef and bacon. Drain most of the grease off.
3. Add onions, garlic, & celery to the meat and cook just until soft.
4. Add salt (if using), pepper, bay leaves, Italian Seasoning, & parsley.
5. Add tomatoes, broth, and/or consommé and simmer on low for 45 minutes.
(If short of broth, then add consommé to the required amount of soup you want.)
6. Add gnocchi about 10 minutes before serving and allow to puff up (gnocchi puff just slightly).
7. Serve topped with a garnish of grated Parmesan cheese. A slice of garlic bread adds an extra punch to your meal. For a creamed soup, add milk or cream to taste before serving.

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Are We Rural Activists?, Submitted by Angela Scott, President-Elect FWIC

Sometimes, the Women's Institute is described as a circle of tea-drinking matrons tucked away in a church basement, quietly chatting and keeping to themselves.

From the outside, WI seems 'quaint'. There is usually a pot of tea on the table, and maybe something homemade. But if you sit with us for even one meeting, you quickly realize there's a whole lot more going on.

When I gather with WI women, we are anything but idle.

Yes, we visit and laugh — but we also notice things. We notice when local service is at risk, when a family could use support, when a rural issue isn't being heard beyond our roads. Letters written, speakers invited, projects organized, and creative solutions have been shaped right there between conversation and community news. We aren't removed from our towns and villages — we are deeply rooted in them.

To me, rural activism doesn't need a microphone or a headline. It looks like raising money to fix up the community hall, mentoring a young woman, preserving local history, or showing up at a council meeting when something matters.

It looks like stewardship in sensible shoes — sometimes even work boots. We may not call ourselves activists, but we are women who act. Supporting life in rural Canada means paying attention to what keeps a community alive. It means caring about healthcare access, transportation, food security, education, and safe places for people to gather. Rural life is beautiful and resilient, but it doesn't thrive on its own. It thrives because people choose to care.

So - are we rural activists? I believe we are. Not loud or flashy — but steady, practical, and creative. We build, we advocate, we improve what needs improving. And we do it together, one meeting, one project, one conversation at a time.

Rural Activism



Canadian Sashes \$20.
available from Donna Henderson
donna_ross_h@yahoo.ca

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Canadian Forensic Nurses, Submitted by Lynn MacLean, President FWIC

At the last National Convention, members sustained two resolutions to address victims of sexual violence. The resolutions were:

1. *“Be it resolved that Federated Women’s Institutes of Canada initiate a Victim’s Advocacy & Awareness Campaign to increase the knowledge of this Public Health Crisis across Canada and foster the development of a National Forensic Nursing Bursary.”*
2. *“Be it resolved that Federated Women’s Institutes of Canada call on the Provincial Governments to standardize the Forensic Nurse Examiner/Sexual Assault Forensic Nurse Examiner training across Canada and call on the Federal Government to provide a funding mechanism to support forensic nurses throughout Canada for the safety of all victims of sexual violence.”*

To begin working on these resolutions, FWIC was introduced to Liz Louden, the President of the Canadian Forensic Nurses Association, to better understand the challenges forensic nurses face. At the end of the meeting, Liz offered to send us information about the organization and what they are trying to accomplish.



Liz Louden, President of CFNA

One of the association's challenges is sharing its message not only among nurses but also with the public at large. This will be the first in a series of information from the association.

Canadian Forensic Nurses Association (CFNA) Advancing Forensic Nursing in Canada

About the CFNA

The Canadian Forensic Nurses Association (CFNA) is the national voice for forensic nursing in Canada, committed to enhancing trauma-informed, patient-centered, and evidence-based forensic nursing practices. Forensic nurses provide specialized care to individuals affected by violence, abuse, and trauma while contributing to forensic investigations through evidence

collection and expert testimony.

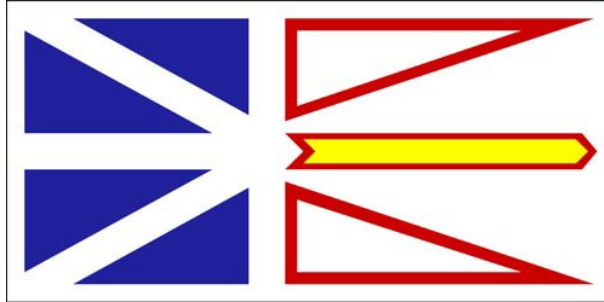
Established in 2006 and rebranded in 2016, the CFNA now represents members across Canada, including Sexual Assault Nurses, Death Investigators, Corrections, and Educators. The association is governed by a volunteer executive board, dedicated to advancing forensic nursing standards and fostering collaboration across healthcare, social services, and justice sectors.

Strengthening Forensic Nursing Services

Forensic nursing plays a critical role in addressing complex issues such as sexual violence, intimate partner violence, elder abuse, child maltreatment, human trafficking, and death investigations.

To strengthen forensic nursing across Canada, CFNA focuses on:

- Developing national forensic nursing standards to ensure consistency in care.
- Enhancing education and professional development to equip forensic nurses with the latest best practices.
- Fostering professional collaboration across the forensic nursing profession.
- Creating community and support for forensic nurses.



The Newfoundland Welcome, Beverly Ann Bradley District Representative for Central Newfoundland & Labrador

Hospitality Among Members

In May 2025, our branch hosted the Central District meeting in Glovertown, NL. This was my second District meeting (I joined in January 2024) and my first year with our branch hosting. There was a great deal of excitement as we began planning the event.

A subcommittee was formed, and soon we were discussing a theme, meal ideas, decorations, games, and of course, time for socializing!

As I listened to the event being organized, my thoughts turned to hospitality and how this gathering would welcome three other branches, life members, and new members. As a newcomer, I was excited to watch everyone interact, learn more about the Women's Institute's history, and feel more connected to these amazing women.

Newfoundlanders are well known for our warm hospitality - showing "come-from-aways" a good time, sharing a cup of tea, a yarn, and many of our local traditions. So, how would we incorporate that same hospitality among ourselves? Our theme, "Shine a Light," featured lapel pins that read "Be a light for all to see." Combined with the beautiful decorations and a delicious meal - complete with homemade cranberry sauce - it created the perfect setting to welcome everyone.

The day was fantastic! I watched old friends greet each other with warm embraces, while others mingled and caught up on family news. The meeting, which included an election of officers, was very informative. It was inspiring to listen to the branch reports and realize all the things we do for our communities, as well as the many donations that help create positive change in the world.



During the meeting, I was nominated for the District Representative position and accepted, without fully realizing what the role would entail. Still, I was happy to be part of a group that continues to empower women. I received so much encouragement and support from many of the ladies. One comment that stood out the most came from Agnes Richard. When she heard my name being nominated, she recognized my last name and asked if I was related to Lorna Stuckless. I told her yes; she was my aunt. Agnes shared that Aunt Lorna had been a good Women's Institute friend of hers and said that if I were related to her, I would surely do a great job

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as District Representative. The day was a great success. It was Newfoundland hospitality at its finest!

P.S.

Here is a copy of the homemade cranberry sauce recipe that was used at our meal (made by our branch secretary Lissa Dionne-Butt)

Homemade Cranberry Sauce

- 4 cups cranberries
- 1 cup water
- 1 cup sugar

Boil sugar and water until the sugar dissolves. Add cranberries to the pot, bring to a boil, reduce the heat, and continue to simmer until the cranberries burst. Add orange zest (optional) and transfer to a dish, and ready to serve!

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This & That, submitted by Elizabeth Rushton

AGNES MACPHAIL - The first female Member of Parliament



I do not want to be the angel of any home. I want for myself what I want for other women, absolute equality. After that is secured, then men and women can take turns at being angels.

After almost a lifetime in politics at both the federal and provincial levels, Agnes finally accomplished with her contribution to the passing of Ontario's first equal pay legislation in 1951.

Agnes Campbell Macphail was born March 24, 1890, in Proton Township, Grey County, Ontario. Apparently, her surname was spelled McPhail at birth, but during a later trip to Scotland, she discovered that her family's surname had been spelled Macphail, and she changed her name to reflect this. She attended Owen Sound Collegiate and Vocational Institute for one year before transferring to Stratford Normal School, from where she graduated with a second-class teacher's certificate. She applied for five positions and was accepted for all five, but later said this was not due to her competence but to a shortage of teachers at the time. She taught in several rural schools

in Ontario and Alberta, but it was while working in Sharon, ON, that she became politically active, joining the United Farm Women of Ontario and becoming a columnist for the Farmer's Sun paper.

Federally, she became the first female MP in Canada when she was elected as a member of the Progressive Party of Canada for the district of Grey Southeast, going on to be re-elected in the 1925, 1926 and 1930 federal elections. In 1924, among other things, she objected to the Royal Military College of Canada on the grounds that it taught snobbishness and provided a cheap education for the sons of the rich and in 1931 she objected to government support for the College as she opposed it on pacifist grounds.

After joining the socialist Ginger Group, a faction of the Progressive Party that later formed the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF). In 1932, she became the first president of the Ontario CCF but left in 1934 when the United Farmers of Ontario withdrew over fears of Communist influence within the Ontario CCF. However, she did remain close to them, often joining their caucus meetings, and they did not run a candidate against her in her next 3 federal campaigns.

She was again elected in 1935, this time as a United Farmers of Ontario Labour MP for the newly formed Grey-Bruce riding. She worked on many issues, including rural concerns, prison reform, and her concern for women in the criminal justice system led her to found the Elizabeth Fry Society in 1939. Other causes she supported included pensions for seniors and workers' rights. She was defeated in the 1940 election, and though she ran again under the banner of the Reform Party in a by-election, she was again defeated. This was her last federal campaign as a candidate.

Agnes was the first Canadian woman delegate to the League of Nations in Geneva, where she worked with the World Disarmament Committee. Although she was a pacifist, she voted for Canada to enter the Second World War. She was a frequent contributor to newspapers in Grey County, writing dispatches from Parliament on news of interest to rural communities, as well as several reminiscences about rural Ontario.

Following a family tragedy in her hometown, she moved to the Toronto suburb of East York and rejoined the Ontario CCF under which banner she was elected to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario for the riding of York East. Along with Rae Luckock, she was one of the first women to be elected to the Ontario legislature. Although she was defeated in the 1945 election, she was elected again in 1948, but after the successful passing of the equal pay legislation in 1951 she was defeated in an election later that year.

She was eager to see more women in politics and said, "Most women think politics aren't ladylike. Well, I'm no lady. I'm a human being." Agnes never married, devoting her life to supporting her many causes through her political involvement. She had supported the Famous Five petition to the Privy Council in England and was a friend of Nellie McClung. She died on February 13, 1954, aged 63, just before she was to be offered an appointment to the Senate. She is buried in Priceville, Ontario, with her parents and one of her two sisters.

She has been widely commemorated with three schools, a park, a playground, a Youth Resource Centre and food bank, a street in East York, Grey County Road 9, a cairn and bronze bust in Hopeville, ON and even an apartment building in Windsor is named Agnes Macphail Manor. In 1993, to mark the 50th anniversary of her election to the Ontario Legislature, the then Mayor of East York proclaimed March 24 to be observed annually as Agnes Macphail Day - and, as far as I could tell, that continues to this day. The following year, the Agnes Macphail Award was established to recognize a resident of East York who has made outstanding contributions to equal rights and social justice. In 1997, an Agnes Macphail public speaking contest was established for students.

In 1985, she was designated a National Historic Person, in 2005, she was voted the Greatest Ontario Woman, and in 2017, she was featured on the Canada 150 commemorative edition of the ten-dollar bill, becoming the first woman, other than the Queen, to appear permanently on Canadian currency.

(If you wish to know yet more about Agnes Macphail, check out the Canadian Encyclopedia or Wikipedia, though personally I found the Canadian Encyclopedia more interesting.)

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Sustainable Style and Earth Day: What's the Connection?

Submitted by Margie Taylor, President of Women's Institutes of Nova Scotia

What impact does Earth Day, April 22, have on you? Do you celebrate the day by making an impact, or do you wonder, why bother?

Promoting environmental awareness and sustainability is always worth it if you want to protect the planet and support biodiversity and clean air. Adopting eco-friendly habits, by using sustainable products, conserving energy and water, and cutting down on waste, can help reduce our environmental footprint.



Engage others in climate action by sharing resources and encouraging sustainability initiatives. Use your voice and platforms to share your love for the environment. Let people know what actions you are taking to protect our planet by being a responsible consumer and making mindful, sustainable choices.

Temperatures are rising, now that Spring has sprung, with the sun rays getting warmer so there is no better time to line dry your clothes and cut down on greenhouse gas emissions. Sort through your closets and do a deep Spring cleaning by upcycling your wardrobe and by donating clothing items to charities who could use them the most.

To quote Sir Isaac Newton "for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction". So, let's be the action and see what reaction we can foster! Happy Earth Day!

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News from the Homestead,

Submitted by Veronica Boone



This March, we welcomed spring with a number of hands-on crafting workshops! A special thank you to everyone who showed their support by attending these events, along with Cheryl Humphrey, member of the Paris Royal Canadian Legion Branch 29, for hosting our second knit & crochet poppy workshop in honour of the Legion's 100th anniversary this year!

Welcoming Spring at the Homestead!

Easter at Addie's (Family of 4 - \$20.00, Single - \$7.00)

Saturday, April 4th (11:00 am – 2:00 pm)

To purchase tickets please visit our website, www.adelaidehoodless.ca



We are excited to welcome families back to our annual Easter at Addie's celebration! A fun-filled morning exploring the historic property, hunting for eggs, and meeting all sorts of cute farm animals!

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Activities will include:

- Easter Egg Hunt (to begin approx. 12:00)
- Museum Scavenger Hunt
- Outdoor Games
- Easter Crafts
- Petting Zoo (runs from 11:00 – 1:00)
- Pictures with the Easter Bunny
- & So Much More!



Grab your kids, bring your baskets, and hop on over for a morning of family fun!

Herbal Teas & Remedies Workshop (\$25.00/person)

Saturday, April 18th, 2:00 – 4:00 pm

Join us once again and step back in time to discover the healing traditions of the 1800s in this hands-on, **herbal tea workshop**, hosted at our historic homestead museum. Learn from herbalist Laural Winger how to use wild and garden herbs to create soothing teas and simple remedies for the home. Come blend and try a number of herbal teas, enjoy an educational walk around the property, and explore the timeless wisdom of natural wellness—just as it was practiced centuries ago. Make sure you dress weather appropriate!

Planning your Vegetable Garden (\$15.00/person)

Date/Time TBD (Please check our website and social media for updates)

Thinking about starting a veggie garden this year? Or do you need some tips and tricks? On Friday, April 24th, Amy Bradley from Our Old Farm will teach us everything there is to know about spring planting! From picking the perfect spot to the dos and don'ts of harvesting, this workshop will have you ready to fulfill all your veggie garden dreams. Enjoy snacks and refreshments courtesy of the homestead and take home your very own 'starter pack' of seeds!



Keep the home fires burning!

"I encourage each branch to take up a small special collection — every shared twonie helps keep the Homestead alive." Marian Austin, Cathcart WI, Hamilton Ontario



Donations can be made to the - Federated Women's Institute of Canada,
PO Box 209, 359 Blue Lake Road, St. George, ON N0E 1N0
E-Transfers to info@fwic.ca, and cheques are appreciated, made out to FWIC.



Who Were the Farmerettes, Submitted by Willa Wick

Hopefully, you've been seeing the word "Farmerettes" pop up here and there lately. Who were the Farmerettes? Unfortunately, very few people know. Ask a young person, and they'll probably tell you a farmer's wife or daughter.

Farmerettes were a very important part of the food chain during the war years. They actually formed an integral part of Canadian war history that isn't in the regular school curriculum. Let's back up some 85+ years. If you were a high school girl who was promised 'no final exams' if you signed up to lend a hand and spend the summer helping farmers in southern Ontario harvest their fruits and vegetables, would you go? Some 40,000 teenage girls did. Most of these girls didn't even have farming experience.



Bonnie Sitter was sorting through her late husband's family pictures when she found one with the writing 'farmerettes 1946' on the back. She had no idea who the girls were, nor who Farmerettes were. But she found out. Going into research mode, Bonnie found that the Farmerette girls were part of a government-sponsored war-effort program. She learned a lot and realized that no one under age 50 or 60 had a clue about Farmerettes. In 2018, she wrote an article for *The Rural Voice*. That connected her to Shirleyan English, another author and former Farmerette. Together, they shared stories, searched for girls based on their descriptions, and collaborated to write and publish the book *Onion Skins and Peach Fuzz*. The book is filled with personal stories of girls from Timmins to Toronto on how they spent their summers as Farmerettes with the program that ran from 1941 to 1952. All these girls signed up to 'Lend a Hand' because the male population, normally working the market-gardening farms in Southern Ontario, was away at war.

Bonnie Sitter wasn't content to just write a book about the past; she wanted something to happen to gain recognition. She started giving presentations both in person and by Zoom. But presentations only made the audience aware of the history; Bonnie wanted identity.

The push to get the Farmerettes onto a stamp began with a letter-writing campaign, complete with pictures, sent to all MPs and others right across Canada. Senator Rob Black (of Fergus) contacted Canada Post and supported the application. The collector stamp was issued in 2024.

Film producer Collin Field and Bonnie Sitter collaborated for several years, interviewing surviving farmerettes and gathering stories for a documentary that premiered in April 2025. The film *We Lend a Hand* has been on tour around Ontario ever since. For continuity, the advertising poster has been the same, so it's quickly recognized.

Carry-On Women's Institute of Palmerston worked with Field and Sitter to bring the documentary to the local Norgan Theatre. Both afternoon and evening were showing. Both were sold out (200 seats each), and about 30 had to be turned away for the 7 pm run.

The question on everyone's mind was, "Why didn't we know about this?" Senator Black attended the afternoon performance. When greeting the audience, he reiterated that this should be in the school curriculum, and if you agree, write to your MPP.

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For the more detailed story of the Farmerettes, check: <https://welendahand.ca/> or for continually updated information, use the Facebook page "Farmerettes Forever." To arrange a presentation or show the documentary contact Bonnie Sitter: bonnie.sitter@gmail.com

The documentary circulated throughout Southern Ontario during 2025, but staff and producers are taking a break until spring. In the meantime – this is a women's story – a perfect venue for Women's Institutes to not only explore, but to promote.

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April is Aloette Month!
FWIC Fundraiser

Aloette
Farm to Jar Beauty

Hello, my name is Sharon Hofman and I am your Aloette Skincare/Beauty Consultant!. I am excited to help raise money for FWIC.

Catalogue link - <https://ziniy.com/aloette-catalogs/aloette-catalog-2024-english>

How to contact me....
Call me - 519-335-6066 (Home), Cell 519-998-9382 (call or text)
E-mail - aloettewithsharon@gmail.com

Hello, my name is Sharon Hofman, and I am your Aloette Skincare/Beauty Consultant!

I am excited to help raise money for your organization. For the past 7 years, I have been a consultant with the Aloette of Oakville franchise. I joined when I was 43, and this is now one of my

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part-time careers where I get to help women and men with their skincare needs. Before this, I was a full-time stay-at-home Mom, where together with my husband, Heike, and our 4 children, aged 15-21, we ran our Dairy operation in Howick Township (Ontario). I love that Aloette has allowed me to still put my family first. I also work part-time at a swine operation, caring for the moms and their babies. So, I'm a jack of all trades kind of girl! 🤪

I am a straight-to-the-point kind of gal, so let us get to it. Aside from using the product myself for 15 plus years, here is how you can connect with me, place an order, and learn more about Aloette products and why I love and want share their products with YOU ❤️

How to contact me, place an order, browse the website or catalogue.....

Call me – 519-335-6066 (Home), Cell 519-998-9382 (call or text)

I'd love to chat with you on the phone or even through video chat such as messenger

I'd love to chat with you, text or even video chat over Messenger.

E-mail - aloettewithsharon@gmail.com

Catalogue link – <https://ziniy.com/aloette.../aloette-catalog-2024-english>

Event Link Federated Women's Institute of Canada Aloette Fundraiser Our website is great for searching about product information/pricing but when you are ordering or if you have any questions at all I do encourage you to contact me directly via one of the ways I mention above. I will ensure you get the best possible pricing and help you get the products that are right for you. Fundraiser Facebook Group - Federated Women's Institute of Canada Aloette Fundraiser | Facebook

YouTube Channel - Sharon Hofman. Here you will find all the short video's I have made for this fundraiser talking about everything Aloette. I encourage you to check them out.

Marie Kenny, ACWW Area Canada President



Dear Society Members,

I hope this finds you well. As I write, the sun is setting on a full day of Zoom meetings, phone conversations, out-of-the-house appointments, and my cherished time spent with Cecil. Each day we are all given only 24 hours; the choice is ours how we choose to spend those hours, but the output of our choices is what lingers long after we rest our head on the pillow that night.

For the past three years, I have learned so much; you have demonstrated to me the remarkable dedication and impact of our society's members across Canada. From coast to coast, to coast, you, the members have contributed time, expertise, and creativity to initiatives that strengthen communities, advance knowledge, and support the shared vision of ACWW. I am so thankful to Lynn MacLean and Angela Scott, who invited me to

contribute to WI Connections each month. Each of my reports has highlighted the diverse and valuable work carried out by our society members, reflecting both the breadth of their efforts and the collective commitment that continues to move societies across our nation forward, strengthening your voice locally, nationally, and internationally. I have shared your stories and your work with the ACWW Board of Trustees. Each report was received with interest and hopefully inspired.

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Communication and engaging with societies and coordinators have been a major part of my work. To enhance communication with Cercle de Fermières de Québec, some ACWW updates were translated into French. This has been very well received. I am thankful for the support of Marie Parent, the President. I have regenerated our communication with the National Farmers Union. It was fantastic to have Summer Hansell, President of NFU Women's Sector, at the ACWW Area Canada Conference, and now to be receiving information from this society's members as they participate in the ACWW Women Farmers Story bank. What I have learned is pretty straightforward: Members want to know they are heard on issues and that they receive a timely response.

I send Congratulations to society president Nancy Briss, President of the Southern Supporter Group, and her team for hosting an educational and advocacy event on Gender Based Violence and Intimate Partner Violence. This was a fantastic initiative, both to educate and raise awareness of what is happening around us and to understand the support in place for the victim. It also shares information on how vital it is to advocate for systemic change in the laws to enhance prevention and intervention.

Education and knowledge sharing have always been the heart of all the work undertaken by ACWW. But we cannot do it alone. Working together, our collective voice is stronger. You have no doubt heard the quote that says, "It takes a village to raise a child." I believe it takes a global movement of like-minded women to bring about necessary systemic change in our world. That change begins with you and with me, raising our voices and advocating locally, nationally, and internationally.

As I complete this role as Canada Area President and my last entry to WI Connections as your ACWW Canada Area President, I congratulate my successor, Anne Innes. I wish her nothing but success, and I know she will do an outstanding job.

It has been both my honour and privilege to be elected to this role; one I have not taken lightly and have carried out to the best of my ability. I thank you, the members, for your ongoing support. It has been an absolute blessing to meet many of you as I have travelled to visit societies. Thank you to those who hosted me in their homes, and special thanks to Michelle, Margaret, and Anne for showing me so much of your beautiful province. I send a special thank you to the BCWI Hostess Committee for supporting me throughout the preparation journey and for helping deliver a wonderful Canada Area Conference. These women will always have a special place in my heart. Thank you to FWIC for partnering with me to bring the two FWIC/ACWW Advocacy Workshops to members across Canada. Last, but certainly not least, a huge thank you to Cecil and my family for their full support every step of this journey. I am truly blessed!

I leave you with this inspirational quote by *Queen Elizabeth II*

"When life seems hard, the courageous do not lie down and accept defeat; instead, they are all the more determined to struggle for a better future" —

Happy spring and a Blessed Easter!

Marie Kenny, ACWW Canada Area President.

