



# WI Connections

Monthly Newsletter of the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada

## WI Month

*Joan Holtke*, President

Dear Friends

February is a special time for Women's Institute members, being that it is the birth month of our founder Adelaide Hoodless whose life we revere and honour, and also the 102<sup>ed</sup> year anniversary of our Federated Women's Institute of Canada organization. Over the many years since her passing, her memory lives on in the many good works and ideals she passed on to us. You, the provincial members have exemplified those qualities by showing to Canadians a solid commitment to helping build strong lives and communities everywhere. You have willingly shared some of your strength and talents by your membership within our national and world organization and I thank you for that.

The talented and dedicated members of my board have comprised a program to celebrate this auspicious month, via zoom, Feb. 19, at 3:00 p.m. ET. You are welcome to circulate the connection, so many can take part in the program.

Lastly, I would like to send everyone a big, red chocolate heart for Valentine's day. You are all so special and I look forward to a time when we can meet again with each other –Face to Face, as our Collect says.

Stay warm, safe, and keep up your good work for Home and Country.



WI Week Celebration – Founders Day

Friday February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Time: 3PM Eastern

This year's theme...124 years and going strong!

We will celebrate with...

- ➔A country wide check in with 10 provincial Presidents,
- ➔Some great stories of about our founders and...
- ➔An inspirational talk by keynote speaker, Marie Kenny; Former President of WI Canada FWIC and current representative for ACWW to the United Nations.

# Hearth is where the Home is

E-book Project – submitted by Judy Page Jones

We can safely say that 2020 was one of the most memorable years in history, the Covid-19 Pandemic has impacted just about everyone in Canada in some way. When we researched what W.I. members did during the last pandemic, the Spanish Flu, we could find extraordinarily little information. This is where the concept of the E-book was created about the experiences of W.I. members during the Covid-19 pandemic. We will use the articles that have been previously sent in to the W.I. Connection newsletter, but we still would like more articles, poems, stories, pictures of what your Branch/County/District/Province or what you have done during the past difficult year. What did your members do about meetings, were they involved in community work, how did you celebrate the holidays, start any new traditions?

Send all articles by email to: [judyqwi@gmail.com](mailto:judyqwi@gmail.com)

Mail to: Hearth is Where the Home Is - 170 West Brome Rd., West Brome, QC J0E 2P0

## Coming Up...

### Virtual Workshops

To be presented by each province, there will be a series of virtual workshops on everything from crochet to photography. As part of the New Horizons for Seniors project with WI Canada FWIC we will honour our elders by presenting individual workshops on all sorts of personal development workshops. Learn about your creativity and your fellow WI members at the same time. It is a great way to connect during this disconnected pandemic. Further information will be published in the WI Connections, on the website and by e-mail. Margaret Byl, our President-Elect is looking after this project, so watch for more info to come.



### Upcoming Programs:

March 6 – NSWI – Kokedama

March 13 – FWIO – Re-purposing Heirloom Doilies

March 21 – AWI- Painting

TBA – NLWI – Gardening

**Watch for more updates!**

## Notices, Events & Other Good Stuff

<p><b>Past President Competition</b></p> <p>Pin Design commemorating the 2021 FWIC/WI Canada Triennial and ACWW Canada Area Conferences to be held virtually in July.</p> <p>As FWIC Past President, Linda Hoy will donate a prize for the winning entry.</p> <p>Send your lapel pin designs in a JPG format to her at <a href="mailto:lhfwic@gmail.com">lhfwic@gmail.com</a> by March 31, 2021</p>	<p><b>WI Canada FWIC &amp; ACWW</b></p> <p>ACWW Canada Area President, Linda Hoy and Joan Holthe wish to inform you that our June plans to visit Newfoundland in conjunction with FWIC Triennial and ACWW Canada Area Conference have been cancelled and the decision has been made to hold virtual meetings on the following dates:</p> <p>FWIC – July 5 – 6, 2021 ACWW – July 12 – 13, 2021</p>	<p><b>Support FWIC/WI CANADA and purchase your premium package today!</b></p> <p><b>\$45.00 Value</b> for only <b>\$20.00</b>. You get a WI Canada Pin, a *Virtual On-line Tarot Reading Gift Certificate for your entertainment, WI Canada Pen, an Adelaide Hunter Hoodless Booklet, an Adelaide Hunter Homestead Post Card and a <i>Program</i> Membership Card. FWIC/WI Canada supports the member provinces by giving 2% of net received to Province of Residence of the purchaser! Other items will be added to the package as sponsors/partnerships are developed e.g.: discounts to movies, retail store or travel company partners. This is an annual package renewal.</p>
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## The Adelaide Hunter Hoodless Canadian Woman of the Year Award Nominations Now Open

Nominees do not have to be members of a Women's Institute. **This Award** seeks to acknowledge **dedicated women** whose contributions make their communities and our world a better place to live. **Adelaide Hunter Hoodless Canadian Woman of the Year Award** recognizes the hard work, dedication, and support that these women have offered and continue to offer as they give leadership, inspire others, and make a difference while exhibiting the qualities of Adelaide Hunter Hoodless, the founder of the Women's Institute movement. Nominations will close at midnight on March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021. Go to <https://www.fwic.ca/canadian-woman-of-the-year-nomination>

## SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

New Deadlines- March 31, 2021 for the Tweedsmuir Triennial Competitions, Senator Cairine Wilson Competition and Adelaide Hunter Hoodless Canadian Woman of the Year Award

### TRIENNIAL TWEEDSMUIR COMPETITIONS & Senator Cairine Wilson Competition

Submissions are beginning to come in. Don't forget about the cash prizes available to be won! The deadline for submissions is now March 31, 2021. Competition submissions are welcome at the Adelaide Hunter Hoodless Homestead. Details and submission forms are on the website.

Mail your submissions to PO Box 209, 359 Blue Lake Rd., St. George, ON N0E 1N0.

Digital submissions can be emailed to [info@fwic.ca](mailto:info@fwic.ca)

## Telling Our Story during WI Month...

The Federated Women's Institutes of Canada (WI Canada), is the national organization that provides a united voice for all Women's Institutes across Canada while advocating for national directives in health, poverty, food safety, environmental preservation and community support. The Women's Institute movement and organization grew from humble rural origins into one of the leading advocacy networks in the world.

The first Women's Institute was founded in 1897 in Salt Fleet (now Stoney Creek), Ontario, where Erland and Janet Lee invited a group of women to their home to hear Adelaide Hoodless speak on the importance of women engaging in formal domestic education and organizing a unified voice to advocate in the areas of education, family health and community service to improve the lives of their families, the families in their communities, and families across Canada.



Adelaide's loss of her own young son, John Harold at just 14 months old, gave rise to her mission to organize and educate women and mothers around the world about food safety ensure every woman was trained in homecare and domestic science. She routinely travelled across North America to deliver her message of the importance of domestic education to the success of a family, and the nation. Eventually, she became an internationally recognized speaker and advocate for family education.

Her story continues to inspire Women's Institutes across the globe to focus their work on healthy family and community initiatives. Today, visitors learn about Adelaide Hoodless, her family, and her mission which inspired the Women's Institute Movement at the Adelaide Hunter Hoodless Homestead National Historic Site in St. George, Ontario. As Adelaide and her Women's Institute colleagues continued to spread their word, more branches were organized. Women across the country started to advocate for more than domestic education.

WI's started to work towards agricultural improvement, expanding basic education curricula, and lobbying for women and children's rights. Many women were inspired to start, or join, their local Women's Institutes to improve their lives and the lives of their friends and neighbours.

Throughout World War I, Women's Institutes served as diligent subjects of the British Empire and provided the much-needed support for soldiers at home and abroad. In addition to providing clothing, linens, and other textiles to the soldiers of the regiments of the British Empire and other allied forces, the Women's Institutes sent much needed

clothing and food to families in Britain to support them through the war years. These partnerships have grown over the last century and continue to strengthen relationships between Women's Institutes across the world. Towards the end of 1918, with the war over and peace settling in across Europe, the idea of a Federation of Women's Institutes came back into conversation. Miss Mary MacIsaac, the Superintendent of the Alberta Women's Institutes, recognized the potential in organizing rural Canadian women into one organization so that they might have a united voice on important issues at a national level.

In February 1919, representatives from the provincial Institutes met in Winnipeg, Manitoba to form the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada. Our first President was Judge Emily Murphy of Edmonton, Alberta, a woman of remarkable ability and energy. WI Canada, as it would quickly become known, set to work to be a unified voice for Women's Institutes across the country.

The Federated Women's Institutes flourished alongside the growing economy and industrialization during the 1920s and 1930s. With more women entering colleges, taking up long term positions as secretaries, teachers and in shops. Many women started to move from the rural towns of their childhood to booming cities across Canada to raise their families. WI Canada started to focus on a more diverse range of issues affecting women of the early twentieth century.

Early resolutions, such as an increase to the age of female consent, parental control and divorce and abandonment legislation, demonstrate the passion of WI Canada for securing women's rights in the changing social climate. Other early resolutions speak to the patriotic undertones of the WI Canada's founders and the concern members had for the improvement and marketability of agricultural activities in rural Canada.

By the end of the 1920s, WI Canada had advocated for women's employment rights, rights to education and health care for all Canadians, and resolutions around immigration and community development. The 1930s brought much of the same until Germany declared war on Britain and its allies in 1939. Just like the Great War, all Women's Institutes, including those in Canada, focused their efforts on supporting troops, fellow Commonwealth communities and the Allied Forces in Europe. WI Canada and provincial branches organized Jam for Britain drives, sent knitwear and clothing to Europe, and raised crucial funding for the Red Cross, among other projects.

**In 1941, WI Canada picked up its national advocacy role once again, working to secure transparency in government affairs and improved access to health care.**

Resolutions of the era reflect the political turmoil of mid-war Canadians and the hope that through government regulations the same mess plaguing Europe could be avoided on this side of the Atlantic. When the War finally ended in 1945, Canadians at home and abroad rejoiced. This war had been more devastating than the first World War and the hope of restored peace fueled patriotism and the Canadian economy once again.

Interestingly, in 1947, three resolutions were brought forth by the WI Canada to ensure more defined acts of patriotism and ensure 'true' Canadian spirit lived among everyone in Canada, these resolutions included designs of the Canadian Flag, the retention of Dominion Day (which for a short time was celebrated as Canada Day – ironic now that the holiday celebrated July first every year is in fact known as Canada Day), and the establishment of a National Memorial Day.

Other resolutions put forth by members during the late 1940s and 1950s focused on consumer safety and ageing communities. With the commodification of goods now mainstream throughout North America, WI Canada worked to ensure a standard for safety and consumer protection was up to par. Resolutions included uniform bottle caps, bread labelling, and standards to textile and clothing labels. Resolutions for old-age pensions, access to health care and accessibility started to make an appearance as well (these are ongoing advocacy issues for Women's Institutes across Canada).

The Hunter Family homestead was opened in 1960 as a museum dedicated to Adelaide and her life's story. In 1995, it was designated a National Historic Site and is still operated as a museum today.

In 1964, the first environmental protection resolution was presented by members. The Water Pollution Resolution formally requested the Government of Canada to enact protective measures for the water supply in Canada, preventing further pollution to fresh water across the country. By the 1970s, WI Canada and its provincial branches had a full slate of goals, objectives, and advocacy targets. Many resolutions of the next couple of decades would bring major change to industry and rural life in Canada that ushered in a fundamental change for all Women's Institutes.

Today, Women's Institutes continue to advocate for domestic education, but they have also expanded their activities to include support for community improvement projects, environmental conservation, equality across genders and advocating for families of all kinds while partnering with sister organizations across the world.

### Dear Members

We hope this abbreviated issue of WI Connections will help you and your Branches feel encouraged to celebrate WI Month on your own, in compliance with the Covid 19 restrictions.

Next month we will be back offering stories from all across Canada, and as always, we welcome your input. Please feel free to contact your provincial Board representative (listed on the back cover of this issue).

Happy Valentines Day and Happy WI Day(s) Everyone!

# 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.*



It has been so interesting, and impressive, to read and hear about the many creative things that so many women have been doing during these past Pandemic months. There are those who have been quilting; Some have been rug hooking for the first time. There are those who have begun painting and those who have been sewing masks by the dozen. I have to confess that sadly I can't keep up with these creative people. I have just continued "poking around". Because of what I have found is that poking has brought back a lot of memories, mostly pleasant, but the occasional not so pleasant. But all have reminded me of what a fortunate person I have been to have such a storehouse of wonderful memories of some wonderful people and experiences.

In one of the old files I was trying to clean out. I came across the front page of "The Evening News and Star", London, June 2, 1964. The Headline read "Challenge to the W.I. What Do We Do Next?" This was the question asked by the President of the National Federation of the Women's Institutes of England, Wales and the Isle of Man in her speech to the 6000 Women's Institute members at their Annual General Meeting in Royal Albert Hall in London. She said that what we do next is the really big question facing the future of the organization. She said that the W.I "could feel itself strong, efficient, respected and mature, but had it finished its work?". She presented a challenge "Isn't our movement mature enough now to take another step, to move on to further things? What about it now? Go home and put this to your members. Enthuse them to make further use of this vast untapped energy we've got". This was just the year before the NFWI would be celebrating their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

That was 1964. Times have changed. But is there something in what was said back then for the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada and its provincial units to consider? I am not a person who lives in the past. I don't want the past to be a hitching post but rather a guidepost. We are facing challenges, what do we want to do next?

I can't conclude this month without being quite personal. It was my privilege to address 5000 Women's Institute members in the Royal Albert Hall while I was ACWW President. I will never forget standing in that fabulous building in front of so many. And just remembering those many voices singing their anthem "Jerusalem" still sends thrills up and down my spine. Memories to cherish.

## Thank-you!

Thank you to the Government of Canada and the New Horizons for Seniors Grant and to Fay Van Horn who presented a “Learning from our Elders” workshop on January 23<sup>rd</sup> on Magic in the Kitchen – Antipasto! This event had our greatest attendance so far! We’d like to thank the attendees from across Canada and the UK. Your feedback has been very positive and we wish to thank Fay for the fantastic demonstration and the great recipe which is a step towards food waste prevention and an introduction to canning. The first 40 attendees living in Canada received a \$20 grocery card to help pay for their supplies when making this tasty antipasto.

Our National Project – “Hearth is where the Home is” will continue with programing after the end of the New Horizons Grant and welcomes your suggestions.

## NOMINATION FOR PRESIDENT-ELECT 2021-2024

Province \_\_\_\_\_

Nominee for president elect \_\_\_\_\_

Qualifications and experience of nominee: \_\_\_\_\_

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Have you received written consent of the nominee? \_\_\_\_\_

Is the home province of your nominee aware of your nomination? \_\_\_\_\_

And are they willing to support your candidate? \_\_\_\_\_

Please return to the WI Canada FWIC office by March 31, 2021.



# Next Month in WI Connections

- Peace Gardens – Manitoba Women’s Institute
- Ontario Women’s Institute
- Nova Scotia Women’s Institute
- Newfoundland & Labrador Women’s Institute

## WI Canada FWIC

- Joan Holthe, President
- Margaret Byl, President Elect
- Jill Copes, BC Executive
- Linda Mason, AB Executive
- Lynn MacLean, NS Executive
- Karen Gerwing, SK
- Denise Joss, MB
- Mary Shortt, ON
- Judy Page Jones QC
- Angela Scott, NB
- Miriam Lank, PE
- Elizabeth Young NL

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359 Blue Lake Road, P.O. Box 209

St. George, ON

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

