

Newsletter December 2025—January 2026

Vol 108. No. 6



1129 Queens Avenue, Brandon, MB, Canada R7A 1L9

Fisher Branch WI Hosts Joy Smith Foundation

The Joy Smith Foundation hosted by the Fisher Branch Women's Institute brought their Human Trafficking Awareness program to the Fisher Branch middle and high school students along with an evening presentation for community members.

Students were made aware that Human Trafficking is the buying and selling of another human being for sexual purposes. Human Trafficking is now the fastest growing criminal enterprise, only second to drug and gun trafficking.

Students were informed that:

- * Human trafficking is likely impacting someone within 1 KM of their location at any time and may not look like the TV version of someone being abducted and locked in a house with many other individuals. Some young people being trafficked live with their families and attend school.
- * People being forced into unwanted sexual behaviours are often controlled by criminals using blackmail, violence/beatings, threats of violence, or threats to harm the loved ones of the young person.
- * Youth aged 13/14 up to age 20 are the most often targeted by traffickers.
- * Most vulnerable persons to be targeted for trafficking are youth who are new to a community and are looking for new friends, youth who desire to please the people around them, those who have suffered complex traumas, and young females. Although boys are becoming more frequent victims than in previous years especially in sextortion cases.
- * Examples of complex trauma are being bullied over a long period of time, trying to fit in with peers who are unwilling to be “nice and friendly”, people who want to be liked by those they consider the popular students, people who have been caught in an embarrassing situation and are being threatened that their secret will be told.
- * Youth are usually victimized by a new friend or romantic interest who is trusted by the victim, or someone the victim meets online and then is invited to meet with.
- * Online connections are becoming common due to the variety of social media platforms and gaming rooms, especially for boys.

How do Predators Find Victims

Predators find victims by casting a wide net to locate public social media profiles. They then send a friend request to the target. Once the target accepts the friend request the criminal can find the location of the victim. Criminals will often make contact with victims within 2 minutes after the victim creates their social media profile.

Rule of Thumb is if you do not know someone online then do not trust them.

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Provincial Board 2024-2025

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Southwest/North: Liz Chongva

Wpg.-Interlake: Gisela Nolting

Manitoba Agriculture: Thelma Blahey

WI Canada/FWIC Provincial Representative: Debra Barrett

Manitoba Gov't Appointed Members: Michele Gurman

Acting UofM Home Ec.: Ann Mandziuk, PHEc,



Mission Statement

“Manitoba Women’s Institute is an organization that focuses on personal development, family agriculture, rural development and community action... locally and globally.”

Vision Statement

Manitoba Women’s Institute strengthens women, families and communities.



Visit www.acww.org.uk for a new ACWW experience, updated resources, new presentations, more information, easy membership renewals.

Visit the FWIC website
<https://www.fwic.ca/>



President's Report



Hello Everyone,

Welcome to our final newsletter for 2025. The MWI Board and I wish each of you and your loved ones a very Merry Christmas or Happy Holidays, whichever you celebrate. May your lives be filled with health, happiness and love.

As this year closes and we look back on 2025 we find a year that has slipped by with incredible speed. Our board has been a source of strength, commitment and energy this year and without them MWI would cease to exist.

Our MWI branches have seen significant changes this year with us bidding goodbye to some locals which saw membership struggling as life adjustment take place and people move from their homes to different locations and housing. To each of you who will be seeing your branches disband please remember your friendships over the many decades and seek to continue to chat and visit whenever possible. Your friendships have been a source of strength, and we hope they will assist you as you travel through life's cycle. On behalf of the Board we will miss your commitment to Women's Institute, but rest assured your contributions will continue to be a source of respect and gratitude in your communities, Manitoba and beyond.

The future of WI across the world continues to grow and fluctuate with communication between countries becoming increasingly simple as technological advancements allow for discussions and conferences without leaving your couch or community.

Our resolutions are being requested in many regions due to their strong content and value to women, their families and communities. Please remember that Resolutions need to be in NOW. We thank Diane McDonald for agreeing to take the Resolutions Chairperson position for this year. Diane has been on the committee for a couple of years and will bring her knowledge and leadership to the position. Should you require information on submitting a resolution please phone or email Mallory at the MWI office for assistance. The contact information is at the beginning of this newsletter.

MWI has set our date and location for the 2026 Annual General Meeting (AGM); it will be held on Friday, May 8th in Dugald, Manitoba. Numerous members requested we try for a Friday AGM rather than a weekend and we are going to give it a whirl. Remember that the AGM portion of the meeting is in the morning followed by speakers in the afternoon. If you have a suggestion for a speaker, please let me know, my contact info is at the beginning of the newsletter. Remember, you do not need to be a WI member to attend, so fill your car with your friends and come enjoy a day of learning and laughter.

In closing, please take the time to relax and reach out to those around you who may be lonely or stuck inside. Well wishes are not just appreciated over the holidays. Your kindness and cheery hello are always appreciated by those receiving them.

Take care and all the very best to you and yours this Christmas season.

Debra Barrett

OFFICE ADMINISTRATORS REPORT

It's officially my favourite time of year! I feel like I say that every season, but Christmas time is truly the most special time for my little family. I purchased myself an early Christmas present which is the new "viral Christmas Tree" (grand duchess) twinkling in my living room in front of me as I'm writing this. With November feeling very chilly, my sons and I have already started playing our traditional board games, Christmas movie nights & holiday crafting! The boys are itching for more snow as they enjoy getting outside snowmobiling whereas I'm quite happy to hibernate this time of year! I hope you all enjoy the holiday season with your loved ones and cherish all the moments you have together.



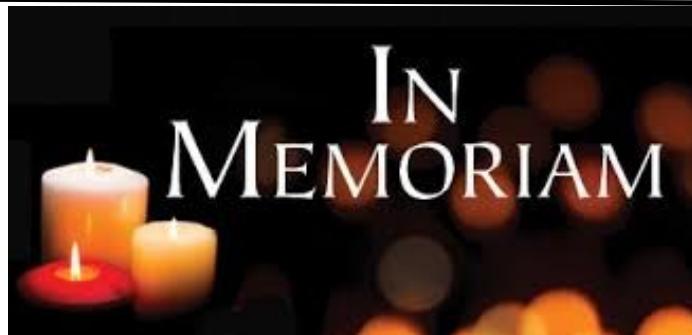
Please note that the 2025-26 membership forms are now due. Please make sure all information on the forms is up to date so we can reach you with our mail and email! If you aren't receiving our emails, please give me a call at the office so we can ensure all the information is current.

Another reminder if there is anything you would like to share about your WI with our social media pages, please email the office with pictures or short write-ups. We love to see them all!

Best wishes for each one of you to have a happy holiday season and all the best for the New Year!

Mallory Makinson
Office Administrator

"No one overgrows
the joy of watching
the twinkling
Christmas lights."



Lenore Women's Institute would like to mention the passing of member **LESLEY NOREK**. Lesley passed away August 8, 2025 at the age of 82.

AUDREY CASSELS passed away on November 18/2025. She was 97 years of age, and was a Life Member of the Women's Institute. She was a member of *Grosse Isle Women's Institute* for many years until she moved to Winnipeg.

At this time of year many who have lost loved ones over the past year may be finding the season of love and joy more difficult. Be gentle and kind to those who experience a loss over the year. We all experience loss and grief differently. Continued on page 12

Continued from page 1

Who to be Aware Of and Stay Away From

- * Strangers making contact with you
- * People promising things that are too good to be true
- * People who are angry and threatening you or your loved ones
- * People encouraging you to keep secrets from your family and friends
- * People who are trying to isolate you from your family and friends both socially and/or emotionally
- * People you feel uncomfortable being around
- * People who use excessive flattery
- * People who try to push you to break rules, and
- * Those who try to make you feel bad about yourself.

The speaker closed the presentations by reminding the young people that they have the power to say YES or NO and to change their mind whenever they want and to trust their instincts when things feel off. Always speak up and tell a trusted adult.

For more information or to book a speaker contact The Joy Smith Foundations by email info@joysmithfoundation.com or phone 204-691-2455 or www.joysmithfoundation.com

Cake Mix Chocolate Chip Santa Cookies

Ingredients:

1 box white cake mix (any brand)
2 large egg whites
2 tablespoons flour
1/2 cup oil
3/4 cup chocolate chips and extras to press on top of the cookies before baking
1/4 cup Christmas sprinkles

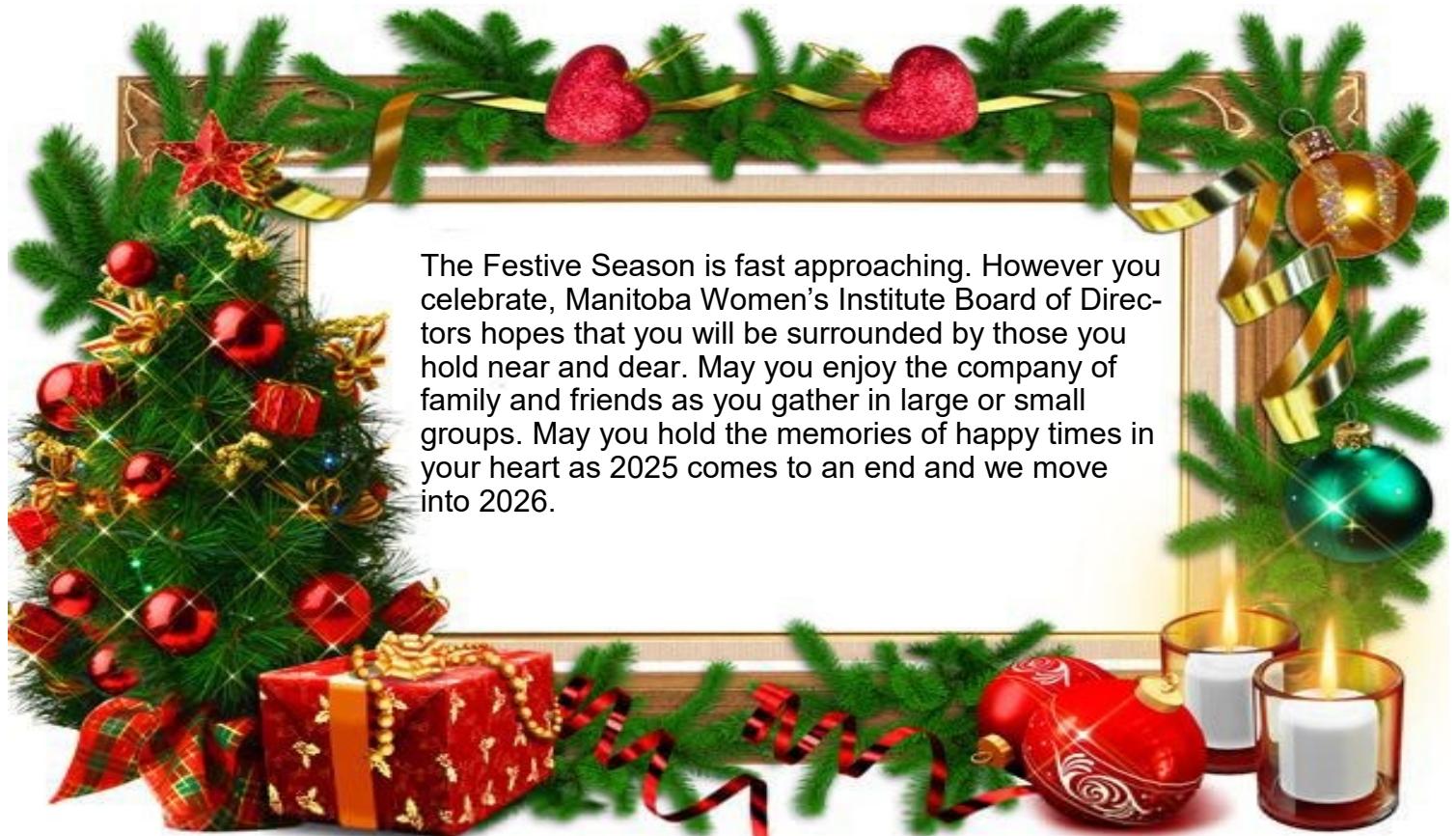
Preheat oven to 350° F. Makes approximately 2 dozen cookies.

Combine the cake mix, egg whites, flour, and oil mixing well. Add in chocolate chips.

Roll the dough into 1-2" size balls and place 2-3" apart on baking sheet. Gently press the dough down and place a few extra chips and sprinkles on each cookie.
Bake 8-10 minutes Do not over bake.

Mallory shared this recipe a couple of years ago when we did a Christmas recipe exchange on a Zoom presentation.

They are quick and easy to make. At Christmas I used red and green chips and a French Vanilla cake mix. I'd like to try a lemon cake mix with white chips. AM



The Festive Season is fast approaching. However you celebrate, Manitoba Women's Institute Board of Directors hopes that you will be surrounded by those you hold near and dear. May you enjoy the company of family and friends as you gather in large or small groups. May you hold the memories of happy times in your heart as 2025 comes to an end and we move into 2026.

What can you make from different parts of jeans?



'HOW TO KEEP ITEMS OUT OF THE LANDFILL?'



Made with seams from jeans this trivet measures 7 inches by 7 inches. I purchased it at a local Craft Sale. AM

Made in Manitoba Project

2025 / 2026

Do What You Can

This year's project covers a broad spectrum of helping. It's entitled "Do What You Can". This gives members a chance to donate/give to causes that are closest to your heart.

Some suggestions include:

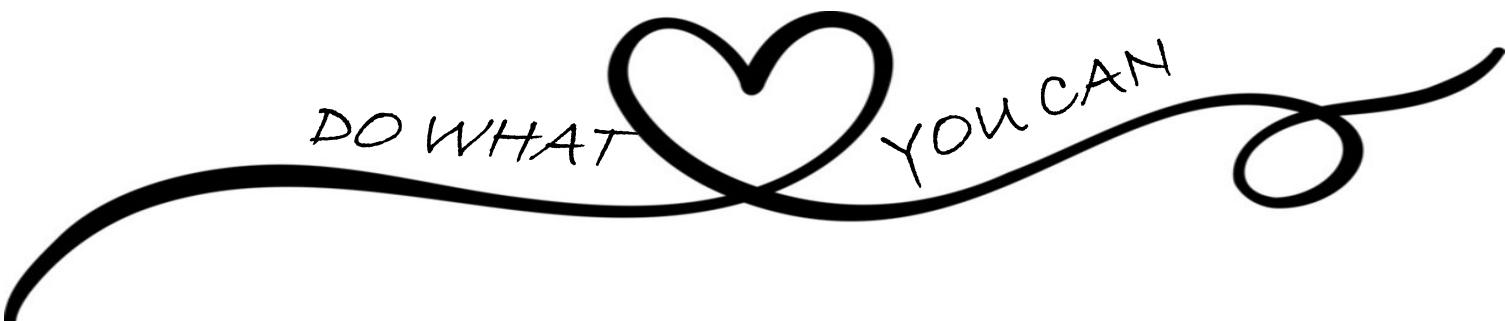
- Donations to local food banks
- Visits to Personal Care Homes
- Donations of clothes/books to Teen Challenge
- Donating winter items such as mitts/toques to local schools
- Donating new socks/underwear to local schools
- Helping out a women's shelter or a home for unwed mothers with what they might need
- Donations to local animal shelter
- Cleaning out your closet for a donation to local thrift store.

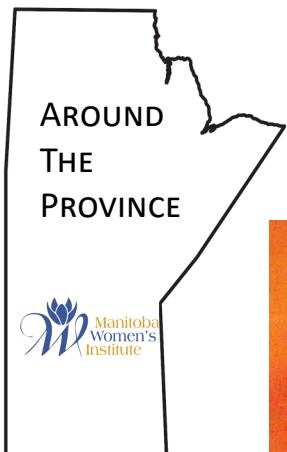
There are so many ways we can help out someone in need and you can decide where you can Do What You Can. With tough times for everyone, I'm sure that any kind of help or donation will go a long way to helping someone else in need.

If possible, please send either a write-up or photo to Mallory at the MWI office. Her email is mbwi@mymts.net. With your permission, we would be happy to showcase these photos on our social media sites.

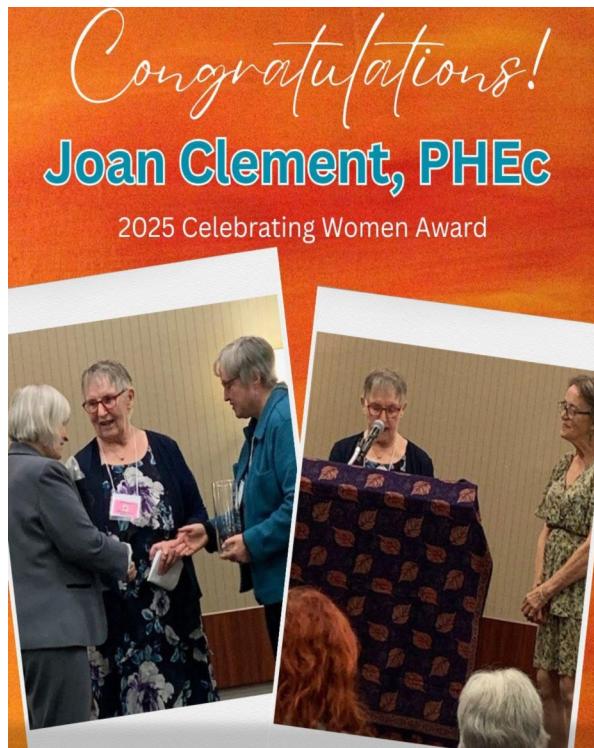
As always, we are always looking for volunteers for our Made in Manitoba committee. I'm always inspired by the saying that Team Work makes the Dream Work. Looking forward to another successful year for this project.

Michele Gurman
Chair





Joan Clement, a MWI Past President was recently honoured with a 2025 Celebrating Women Award by the Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba and Council of Women of Winnipeg. The presentation recognized Joan's work with MWI and was presented in October.



Made in Manitoba Project **Grosse Isle W.I.**

For this project our members donated to food banks. Some visited with friends who have dementia and helped with their meals. One of our members sends sympathy and get well cards to community members as well as birthday cards to older seniors. We all send Christmas and Valentine cards to seniors over 80 years old. Each member sends 3 or 4 cards from our list. We donated to the Sunshine Fund to help kids going to a camp. Some of us give people who don't drive rides. Grosse Isle donated flowers to the heritage site. Some members volunteer in the community.





This year the **Fisher Branch WI** participated in the local Boo at the Rink for Halloween and the Christmas Parade.

Lori Smith used her talents to design a pumpkin using the MWI logo. This new twist on WI advertising was well worth the time put into it as the women loved the WI Jack-o'-lantern.

Along with this pumpkin, WI members designed a Halloween Putz course for the children and adults wishing to test their golfing skills. The course was constructed from eavestroughs and decorated in ghoulish fashion. Approximately 300 people attended the event and totally enjoyed the Putz challenge and treats.

Then came the Christmas Parade with the WI entering a float. Over the decades WI has produced many memorable floats. This year stood out with its multitude of lights and welcoming down home décor.

Well done ladies!



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ACWW : 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence

From November 25—December 10, the 16 Days campaign is aimed at raising awareness and calling for the end of violence against women and girls. The campaign encourages collective action through public events, advocacy, and supporting organizations that work to prevent violence, challenge harmful social norms, and support survivors.

This year's theme focuses on combating digital abuse like harassment, showing intimate pictures online and making false accusations.

Submitted by Gisela Nolting

See page 11 for an example of one of Facebook posts.

Growing Manitoba Ag

Inform. Influence. Inspire.

<https://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/online-resources/signup-for-growing-manitoba-ag.html>
If you would like this newsletter, please go to the link to receive an email sent directly to your inbox.



Happy Birthday to members
celebrating in
February and March.



Don't forget to share the activities of your local/branch with the MWI office so we can let others in the province know what is happening across the province either in our newsletter or in our social media posts.



**16 Days of Activism against
Gender-Based Violence**

DAY 12

**Global rates of child
marriage are declining**
but it is still not fast enough

We call on leaders and communities worldwide:
**UNITE to End Violence Against
Women and Girls**

Associated Country Women of the World
rural women in action
www.acww.org.uk
Registered Charity
No.1174798



This is an example of one of the 16 Facebook posts from ACWW during their 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence. If you are interested in seeing the posts check out their Facebook page.



During the past decade, the global rate of child marriage has declined, with the global proportion of young women aged 20–24 years old who were married before the age of 18 decreasing from nearly one in four in 2010 to almost one in five (19%) in 2024.

However, the profound effects of the pandemic, conflict, and climate crises have threatened this progress, with up to 10 million additional girls at risk of child marriage in the next decade as a result. We need to see strong legislation in place to ensure this does not happen.

In 2022, Uganda implemented The National Strategy on Ending Child Marriage and Teenage Pregnancy, 2022/2023 – 2026/2027. This policy is a holistic, comprehensive framework that reflects the global and national commitment of the Government of Uganda to end the practice of child marriage and other forms of violence against girls including teenage pregnancy.

Other methods of harm and violence towards young girls – including FGM – are still prevalent and are a complete violation of human rights, causing lasting impacts on survivors of such violence.

We need more holistic frameworks implemented by governments to ensure young girls are protected worldwide.

ACWW advocates for rural women globally through funding grassroots, community-led projects, building capacity through international events, and bringing advocacy and rural women's voices to the table in global decision-making. This is vital work, and you can help take it forward by donating to our World President's Appeal at:

<https://acww.org.uk/shop>

If you are affected by the themes of this campaign, please take care and reach out to services that can help such as:

<https://lila.help/> or <https://www.endvawnow.org/en/need-help>

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Hazel Carriere (1938-2025)

Hazel was a long-time member of MWI- initially belonging to *Greenridge WI*, then *transferring to Woodmore* when Greenridge disbanded. On both fronts- she was an active, caring, and dependable member. Many people have said, "Hazel was a member before she was born!" One must give pause to consider, firstly-what a compliment to Hazel's spirit of being, but also how respected she was within WI. While it is often a challenge to have volunteers at WI events, Hazel was always at the ready to lend a hand. And she didn't just 'lend a hand', she enjoyed every minute of it!

Every member brings something to the table when they participate in WI- Hazel brought her kindness and generosity of spirit, and was well loved by her 'Institute family'.

May you rest in peace, Hazel.

Debbie Melosky (1959-2025)

Deb joined *Woodmore WI* in 2009. In 16 short years as a member- she managed to become the heart and soul of our organization, and we are desperately trying to regain our balance since her passing on June 19, 2025. Deb's belief in the Institute matched her energy and drive to improve the lives of people- women, men and children alike- in her local community, but also the broader community of the Manitoba Women's Institute. She held many positions within the Woodmore WI, and was the natural choice to chair every committee she worked with-and she worked on most! She held Board level positions within Manitoba Women's Institute. Deb was an active member of the committee that organized Rural Women's Day, and participated whole heartedly to make it an event that rural women would look forward to annually.

Many local WI's across the province have cast their eyes to Woodmore over the years, and wondered how we could manage to attract women to our membership and grow- how we kept putting our hands up as helpers and activists- how there were so many planned events by Woodmore WI in the community- the list goes on and on- and much of the answer lies in the fact that we had a wonderful, energetic, creative, curly haired treasure, named Deb Melosky.

Deb was a leader. She was a motivator. She was a woman who was a friend to many. She was not complicated- she lived simply and happily in her home with her husband, Walter, and a couple of cats. She loved to garden, which translated into a fierce buy-in with food security and gardening with children. She lived life with a sense of adventure- and it was contagious.

Deb's last big "hurrah" was the 2025 MWI AGM. It all started when she raised her hand, took the lead, and the rest of us followed. What we ended up with was truly a group effort- small town venue, close to Morris- where everything MWI began, a small vintage hall beside a tiny quaint church-a wonderful lunch with our secretary changing hats to become head chef- serving food on her personal dish collection (beautiful touch)- table-cloths and arrangements- a bit of education- and a bit of entertainment- a full scale Woodmore WI effort to create a silent auction-but mostly- many hands to create a warm, welcoming environment. It was a simple reflection of what we, as members of WI, are all about-and what we strive to achieve- the Mary Stewart Collect. Deb achieved it in spades- many times over. Deb is so very dearly missed...



Someone you know is preparing for their first Christmas without someone they love a husband, wife, parent, sibling, child.

Someone else is preparing for their last. For others, it's another year they're trying to get through with a smile that doesn't quite reach the eyes.

The holidays highlight love but they also highlight absence. So if someone seems quieter, more tired, or a bit distant, don't assume they're okay just because the lights are bright and the music is cheerful. Grief doesn't pause for Christmas. It often gets louder.

Be gentle with people. Check in. Show up. Offer patience where words fall short. A little kindness goes further than you think especially in a season that isn't easy for everyone. 

This isn't a book review but I felt I wanted to share this with you. It showed up on my Facebook feed as I was preparing this issue of our newsletter. This is the circumstances for my family this year—and a circumstance for many others across the province. A circumstance for a couple of my friends of mine both just 2 or 3 years out from their loss. A joyful time for many but also when we need to "be gentle with people."

Ann Mandziuk - Editor

On a personal note, Elizabeth and I would like to thank our Women's Institute friends who sent condolences after Paul's passing and get well wishes after my cancer surgery and treatment. The surgery was successful and my oncologist recommended 'risk reduction chemotherapy'. I have finished my course of 4 treatments and now I'm waiting to hear what else is in my future—medication and likely a bone building infusion. Fifteen years after my first cancer diagnosis there are many changes and improvements in the treatments for breast cancer and many other types of cancer. Thank goodness for the ongoing research. AM

The views contained in the book reviews provided to our newsletter are the thoughts/opinions of the writer and not Manitoba Women's Institute.

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Federated Women's Institutes of Canada



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Highlights from the FWIC/WI Canada Board Meeting – Nov 24, 2025

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

Pampered Chef Fundraiser reminder:

Consultant Lynn J. has set up a landing page on Pampered Chef's Table platform. There, guests can peruse specials, watch demos, save recipes and shop! Here is the Table [link](https://table.pamperedchef.com/party/2485375yii) <https://table.pamperedchef.com/party/2485375yii>.

Lynn Johnson presented a Facebook cooking demo of Pampered Chef products on Nov 25. It is available on replay. Thank you for your support.

ACWW and 16 Days of Activism: Publications regarding gender-based violence are being posted on FWIC Facebook page, thanks to Eleanor Lilley of Nova Scotia. Please share as you are able.

Coffee Tuesday: First one is Dec 9 at 7pm: This is intended for those that may have been a WI member, those that are interested in joining WI but there is no branch close by, or someone who wants to know more about WI. Email Angela at president-elect@fwic.ca to register. Angela will send out the Zoom link a day or so before the event.

Uprooting Trafficking: If you missed watching the series, you can view it on this link <https://uprootingtrafficking.com>. There are also several resources listed on the website.

Celebrate WI Day: FWIC will celebrate WI Day across Canada on **February 19, 2026, at 7pm ET**. The theme for this year is "The Stories that Shape Us." Each province is invited to contribute a couple of stories highlighting how the Women's Institute has influenced its members. Those interested in sharing their stories should contact their FWIC provincial director.

Communications & Outreach Committee: Do you have a story to share? Communications is looking for 100 Stories. Send to wiconnections@fwic.ca.

Penpals: Judy and Wendy are looking to match WI members with interested members from around the world. If interested, contact pals@fwic.ca.

Provincial AGM/Provincial Convention dates: Please forward your date to Lynn as soon as you are able.

****Next Meeting of the Board of Directors: Monday, January 26, 2026, at 6 pm ET.**

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

LET'S HAVE SOME COLOURING FUN!



Homemade
GIFTS MADE EASY

Upcoming Events

DECEMBER

- 15—Deadline for **RESOLUTIONS**
- 25—Merry Christmas—Season's Greetings

JANUARY

- 20-22 Manitoba Ag Days—Brandon
- 31—Deadline for newsletter articles/submissions

FEBRUARY

- 19—Women's Institute Day
- 19—FWIC WI Celebration Zoom 7:00 p.m. ET
- 23—Canada's Agriculture Day
- 27—Adelaide Hunter Hoodless's Birthday

MARCH

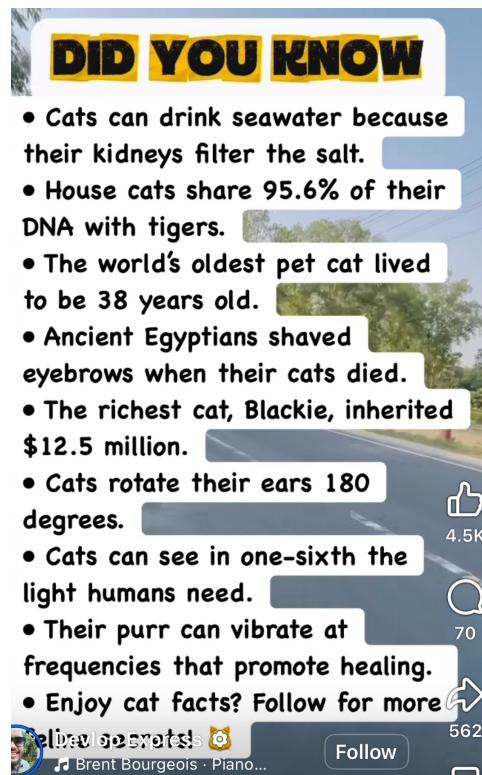
- Canadian Agricultural Literacy Month
- 1—World Complement Day
- 8—International Women's Day
- 21—International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

APRIL

- 21—Earth Day
- 26—May 1 ACWW Triennium, Ottawa
- 30—Deadline for newsletter articles/submissions

MAY

- 8—MWI AGM, Dugald



1. What European country did American retailers first import Christmas decorations from?
2. What do the three kings traverse in the Christmas carol *We Three Kings*?
3. What organization produced the first charity Christmas card in 1949?
4. What plant calls for an exchange of kisses if you find yourself standing under it?

1. Germany
2. Field and fountain, moor and mountain.
3. UNICEF
4. Mistletoe

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To comment or to make a submission, please send an e-mail to:

mbwi@mymts.net

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