

RR1 Distabury AB.
TOMOWO
Nov 24/05.

Dear Darlene,

Thank you for your letter of Welcome and interest but I am almost an old timer.

Because my mother was a member of Westcott W.I. I sewed two articles each month during WWII. Mrs Rose Robertson, Constituency coroner for this area presented me with a pin for Womens War Work.

After nursing for 12 years I married a farmer east of Calgary. Women of Uniform was active there. I worked my way up to director in 1976. Because of the drought we moved back to the farm where I grew up and joined Westcott W.I.

This history should have been sent to the office a year ago so hope it won't be extra baggage for you to take it sometime. I am the only member of Westcott who wanted to continue so am glad that Jackson has welcomed me. Hope I can contribute a bit as my health has failed this year after falling on the ice.

I would like to be remembered to Elizabeth Truhel. 1988 at Federated in St John's Newfoundland she entered & placed in the Jewadsmuer competition, and I placed in the Cairine Wilson one. It was interesting to read each others writings.

I wish you the best in your executive position, and know how busy you will be before June 2006.

Merry Christmas. Sincerely
Daphne Bricker.

WESTCOTT W.I. MEMBERSHIP 1953 - 2002

1953	<u>Charter Members</u> Ethel Baudistel Clara Bogner Mary Dubois Jean Ford Wilma Rinehart Angeline Murphy Joyce Topping Bea Weidner Ellen Wilshusen	1970	Fran Murphy
		1971	Inga Overwater
		1972	Helen Wagner
		1973	Rejane Klinck
		1976	Glenda Klinck
		1977	Phyllis Bricker
1954	Marjorie Hughes Ethel Konschuh Marie Konschuh Laura Sletton Delores Topping	1980	Pat Bannister Geraldine Scott
		1981	Dorothy Harrison Emily Benson
1956	Laura White	1983	Lucy Newsome Linda Topping Norma Vipond
1957	Joyce Hayball		
1958	Margaret Luft Wilma Luft	1985	Anita Cook
		1988	Edna Edwards
1959	Margaret Faas Mrs. Hayball, Sr. Inga Owens Winnie Robertson Zelda Ray Nellie Rinehart	1990	Shirley Goetjen J. C. Shields Dawn Stabber Eileen Woytowich
		1994	<i>Wilma Rinehart</i>
		1996	Bernice Rule
1960	Trudy Robertson Olive Hewitt Patti Schneidmiller	1998	Sandi Toth
		1999	Betty Elliott
1961	Doris Mailer Edna Edwards	2000	Ora Findlay
1964	Mae Beno	2001	Edna Mae Brown Theresa McNeil Bert Mierau J. C. Shields
1965	Gladys Klinck		

Westcott W.I. 40th Anniversary
November 9, 1993

Women's Institute in the Westcott area really goes back much farther than our 40 years. One of my earliest recollections as a pre-schooler is driving back to Rugby W.I.'s with my mother and grandmother Robertson - first with the team and buggy, and then with my dad's first car. I don't know which was the more nerve wracking - Mother was scared of both kinds of transportation. Finally, 65 years ago Mother decided there were women right in the Westcott district who would benefit from a Women's Institute; so in 1928 she was instrumental in forming the first Westcott W.I. It served a very useful purpose in this area, but by 1953 had spread east to Didsbury, south to Jackson, and had 20 or more members.

So 25 years after my mother formed the first Westcott W.I., I looked around our immediate Westcott area, and like my mother, saw there were many young women who could benefit from a club of some sort.

On November 25, 1953 I invited nine of my neighbours to my home to see if they would like to form a *young* women's group. Four of these ladies had W.I. experience: Ellen Wilshusen had been a member of the Westcott W.I. for 14 years; Mary Dubois had taken her mother for several years; and I joined Westcott in 1946 when I was married. Bea Weidner had been a member of Rugby W.I. for eight years before she was married. Ethel Baudistel, whom I had known all my life, Joyce Topping and Angeline Murphy were friends from Westcott Church. They brought Wilma Rinehart and Clara Bogner - two new young wives to the district. After some discussion, we decided we would like a W.I.. We made a list of things we would like to learn, which included learning to knit, crochet, and sew; first aid; how to make pie crust and different salads; and a recipe exchange.

We decided to meet again at Ellen Wilshusen's home December 8, 1953, and asked Mrs. Alex Hogg, Constituency Convener, to be present and organize a Women's Institute. We would decide on a name then.

At the organizational meeting we chose Westcott Junior W.I., which was appropriate because we were all young, beautiful, and enthusiastic in those days.

The nine charter members were: Ethel Baudistel, Clara Bogner, Mary Dubois, Jean Ford, Angeline Murphy, Wilma Rinehart, Joyce Topping, Bea Weidner, and Ellen Wilshusen. During the following year, 1954, five more ladies joined: Marj Hughes, Ethel Kenschuh, Marie Kenschuh, Laura Sletton, and Delores Topping.

We would have our meetings in the evening because, on counting, we found we had

nearly twice as many small children as members, and this would be "Mom's night out!"

Mrs. Hogg then explained about Women's Institute. Membership would be \$0.25, and during the year we must raise money for Constituency dues, District dues, A.W.I. Fund, Federated Fund, and Old Folk's Home (the Constituency Project). After the meeting closed, Mrs. Hogg taught us to knit nine inch squares for the Old Folk's Home. So you see, we were in there with both feet right from the first meeting.

The Westcott Senior group remained a W.I. until 1961, then became a Town and Country group which disbanded in 1968. Sometime after that we dropped the Junior, but I'm not sure when; perhaps when we no longer felt *Junior*, or when we applied for our 20 Year Certificate, and Mrs. Lifraud asked for a brief history of our group. Our answer to that letter is in the minute books.

Over 40 years we have conscientiously paid all our dues, but we have been more interested in our branch members learning from our local reports on the six topics (I think you call them Educational Committees now), whether it be Handicraft, Home Economics, Canadian Industries, or whatever. We have enjoyed our garden tours and other trips; social evenings; and all the things we do as a group, but *mostly the fellowship* and visit with our neighbours over coffee.

Most secretaries have emphasized the fellowship and visits in their annual reports. Joyce Topping perhaps expressed it best in 1969:

This closes 16 years of W.I. work - what we get from each meeting is what we put into it; ideas and changes for programs are always welcome.

We are so "branch-oriented," we have never even been able to get a member to be a Constituency Convener until Phyllis Bricker, who just finished her term.

The first ten years showed the largest growth in our group, going to 16 members by 1958. It was then we decided to hold our meetings in the Westcott School. By then there was power, and we bought an electric kettle, and each donated 2 cups for tea. There was room for speakers and demonstrations, etc.. We were also into quilting after having won \$50.00 in 1959 for a patchwork quilt at Provincial (displayed today). After that honor, and one other embroidered quilt which we raffled, most of our sewing was quilts for Unitarian Service Committee and Red Cross service. You remember those pieces, cut four inches wide and any length, we cut by the dozen? Filled with old wool blankets, or flannelette sheets, backed with flannelette and tied at our meetings? Heavy as lead, but they didn't

have to be quilted - just tied.

That was about the time Bea Weidner demonstrated a vegetable juicer, and explained what each juice we tasted would do for us. By the next day, we knew what else it would do for us, too! I wonder if we had indoor plumbing then - I can't remember.

By 1963 our membership was dropping. Several members had moved away, others were busy with young families, and still others decided W.I. was not their cup of tea.

By 1967 we were back down to nine members and wondered if we should continue, but we persevered. Lunch was changed from sandwiches, pickles, and cake or squares to just dessert. We were meeting in our homes again by then, and I don't know if it was the scrumptious pie Angeline served, but our membership started back up.

By 1969 we were back up to 12 members. Those were the years when we were working more and more for the hospital, taking our turn in the gift shop (which we still do), taking cookies and Valentines for their bingo, and serving at their birthday teas. In 1970 we served fruit bread and cheese, and they are still getting it, but not from us - we serve angel food and ice cream now.

In 1978 we were celebrating our 25th Anniversary on June 17, 1978 at the Community Centre with six of the original members present, plus four more members: Emily Benson, Phyllis Bricker, Glenda and Rejane Klinck. The guest book was signed by 27 guests. Joyce Topping gave a very interesting history of the branch, and this past week she has been constantly in my thoughts. If we had the scrapbook Rejane started later, at that time, where such histories could have been kept, I might not have had to read 40 years of minutes this week. I miss being able to call Joyce up and ask anything about W.I., and have her tell me off the top of her head, or say, "Just a minute, I'll look it up and call you back." As a highlight to the day's activities the following poem was recited:

Nellie Rinehart's Poem 1978

*Oh it's twenty five years in December,
That our Westcott W.I. was new
There are many things to remember
Some of these we will tell to you.*

*There was Ellen, Ethel and Wilma,
Angeline, Mary and Bea too,
Jean and Joyce and don't forget Clara,
Nine young ladies with plenty to do.*

*We soon found we needed some money,
To fill our coffers quite full,
At Bohannon's we served dogs and donuts
In the box stall across from a bull.*

*At quilting we were really novice,
We cut, pressed and stitched with great care
The production was sent to Provincial
And we won fifty dollars there.*

*We hosted a card party one night
Our coffee the best you could brew
The compliments came in for seconds
No-one knew a cigarette case had dropped in too.*

*One time we went out for a treat
Chinese food was so good we agreed
Two days later the place was closed down
For substituting the meat - when in need.*

*We go from home to home for our meetings
With business, exercises and roll call
We are STILL planning ways to raise money
And sometimes we really have a ball.*

*Now we must give some credit to our husbands
Who have batched and baby sat so we could go
To attend important workshops and conventions
That improved our knowledge of things we should know*

*We hope to enjoy many more years
As much as we have enjoyed the past
So come on gals, and work for Home and County
And thank goodness this verse is our last.*

That 25th Anniversary in 1978 was 50 years since my mother had decided Westcott needed a group of local women, and 25 years since I, too, felt we young homemakers needed our own group. But times had changed. Our daughters in 1978 were leaving the

district for careers of their own, and the young women in the area were working outside their home; on the farm, or in the community, or busy taking their children every direction for sports etc. with the Centralized School system. They could learn everything they wanted to know about homemaking and the world in magazines and on T.V. They no longer needed the fellowship and visiting that had become so important to our group.

For the last 15 years, from 1978 to 1993, our membership has remained quite constant; from a low of ten members in 1978 to a high of 15 in 1991, and a present membership of twelve. But that doesn't mean we haven't had good attendance over the years. I didn't check for each of the 40 years, but glancing over the record, more often than not, Ellen Wilshusen, Joyce Topping, and Bea Weidner had perfect attendance. I know in 1968 Bea Weidner was presented with a 15-Year Service Pin for perfect attendance and has had many perfect years since.

Of our present membership, four are charter members: Jean Ford, Angeline Murphy, Bea Weidner, and Ellen Wilshusen.

The other seven who are carrying the brunt of the load today have joined in the past 20 years:

Rejane Klinck	1973
Phyllis Bricker	1977
Dorothy Harrison	1981
Norma Vipond	1983
President Edna Edwards	1988
Secretary Shirley Goetjen	1990
Eileen Woytowich	1990, and
Wilma Rinehart is back and will be rejoining in 1994.	

I would like to thank these members for their active participation in carrying on with the W.I. spirit.

Twice in our 40 years we have lost active members by death. Gladys Klinck, who had been a member for only six years but had taken a very active part, died when she was President in 1971. Then last year on April 28, 1992, Joyce Topping, a charter member who had been with us continuously for 39 years, died. We miss her cheery smile, her unique chuckle when she phoned to remind us of each meeting, and her years of dedicated service. She never missed having knitting for Conference; even sending a baby outfit to Cremona

with me just a month before she died.

Over these 40 years we have gone from being gung-ho for Handicraft and Home Economics at Conference when there were dozens of classes, to having trouble getting one item per member. *But* for the past ten years we have had the cleanest ditches on the Westcott Road from Vipond's to Harrison's old home, and enjoyed doing it - (see pictures in scrap-book). We have learned, or seen demonstrated, every kind of handicraft that has ever become the craze. Do you remember Hodge Podge? I don't! Anyway, we saw it. We have had plant and seed exchanges, given out mixed and everlasting flower seeds to grow and show at our August meeting or garden tour. Do you remember the year Ethel Baudistel gave each of us a few seeds, but wouldn't tell us what they were, "...just plant them in a pot." Some never came up; mine were spindly, but somebody actually got Jerusalem Cherries or Christmas Peppers, I forget which, by Christmas.

Just a few words about how we finance. Over the first 30 years, we were always "low man" on the totem pole when Constituency Secretaries asked for "money earned" or "Bank Balance." *Why*, when we organized, we had a bank balance of \$0.80, which was really a misnomer, because we didn't open an account until 16 months later with \$9.00.

In the first 32 years we had 15 auction sales, which would net \$20.00 in early days, to \$200.00 in later years. Originally we had card parties for \$0.25 each, later \$1.00 per person. We always tried to make W.I. an organization that women could afford to belong to; particularly during the years we were getting started farming and being hailed out regularly. Now our Secretary, Shirley Goetjen, tells me we have the largest bank account of any of the branches - but as the politicians say "...that isn't our fault." We have catered to farm sales of members when they retired, and have been paid for lunch for member's husband's funerals. These are non-renewable resources and we better budget accordingly.

These have been a good 40 years. We have grown intellectually, made many good friends, strived to fulfill our Creed, and worked for Home & Country.

Written by Jean Ford

Westcott Women's Institute from 1993 to 2003

From 1993 to 2003, Westcott W.I. continued with many of the same projects and educational topics.

We continued to staff the hospital gift shop once a month, and serve lunch for funerals, wedding open houses, and 80th and 90th birthdays including our own member, Dorothy Harrison.

We knitted squares for Zambia and sent postage for mailing. The fun things included pot luck suppers with our husbands at Murphy's, a trip to the library where interesting videos were shown, tour and lunch at St. Ann's Ranch at Trochu, a trip to an ostrich farm, the opening of the Rockyview Wildlife Recovery centre (Old Westcott Church) south of Madden, and the Ginger Tea Room in Okotoks with a stop in Bragg Creek on the way home.

1994 A motion was made by Jean Ford and seconded by Bea Weidner that we serve only two tea items at our monthly meetings!!

In August we were saddened by the death of our provincial president from the area, Holly Hallett.

The Bara Rose Girls Club was started at Zella. Many of our members supported their annual breakfast and made donations.

Other money projects included "Bob the Beaver" federated bale-out, and "Wiggles the Bookworm" which was a centennial convention fundraiser.

1996 Our meetings were changed to Tuesday, as Mondays were often holidays.

Bernice Rule was welcomed into our membership.

1997 All provincial groups were asked to calculate and report volunteer hours as the provincial grant fund is based on volunteer time.

Squares for the Zambia project ended but volunteers began to knit "preemie" toques and slippers for local and Children's' hospitals.

1999 Four members were lost during 1999 - Charter member Ellen Wilshusen passed away, Eileen Woytowich and Bernice Rule moved away, and Jean Ford moved to Eckville. We enjoyed a lovely day at Sylvan Lake, toured a pottery craft ship and had tea with Jean in her new home.

Sandi Toth joined and became our secretary.

2000 The next year Brenda Elliott and Oro Findlay joined our group.

2001 Some of our more interesting meeting topics included honey production in Alberta, wind power used in the south, autobiographies give by each member, discussion about water, and a report that the Ozone hole is decreasing in size.

Shirley Goetjen rented the College Green hall for our Christmas party. We had a catered meal, brought guests, exchanged gifts, and ended the event with a singsong. We had such a good time that four new members joined in 2001 - Edna Mae Brown, Bert Mierau, J.T. Shields, and Theresa McNeil.

Donations were extended to Seniors Help Services and Christmas hampers.

2002 Jean Ford, a Charter member, died suddenly in January 2002.

Our group included 15 active members during 2002.

Angeline, one of our Charter members and husband Cliff Murphy celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary.

Our Christmas parties continued at College Green with a cheery addition, Mrs. Santa.

At our 2002 Christmas meeting, Edna Edward, made some presentations to some of our very special members.

Lucy Newsome and Norma Vipond were presented with 20-year service pins; Phyllis Bricker was given a special gift for 25 years, and Rejane Klinck for 30 years of service to the Westcott W.I. group.

Two very special ladies and Charter members, Beatrice Weidner and Angeline Murphy, were given a gift for being dedicated members of our group for 50 years. These are two ladies have worked very hard for their Women's Institute. We all look up to these 50-year members with much pride and admiration.

The last few years many of the members moved into town. The group decided to discontinue with providing catering services as the garage sales proved to be quite profitable.

A motion was carried at the September 2004 meeting that the WI group be discontinued by the end of the year. The younger members thought they were too busy to continue and some of the older members were no longer driving. At that time, there were 13 regular members and \$1,000 in the treasury that was later divided amongst the AWI, ACWW, the library, museum, food bank, and local charities.

It was a sad time for me, as my grandmother, Mary Hughes, was president of the first WI in this area at Rugby in 1914. My mother joined the Rugby WI in 1924 and subsequently the Westcott WI. I have recently been welcomed by the Jackson WI and hope to continue as a member.

The Westcott Women's Institute which started in 1927 has come to an end.

Submitted by Phyllis Bricker