

Wallacetown W.I. celebrates 85th Anniversary

The Wallacetown Women's Institute celebrated its 85th anniversary last week with a special meeting Thursday evening in the South Dunwich Community Centre. Members of the other 11 branches in the Elgin West District attended the festive event.

President Helen Van Brenk welcomed everyone and the meeting opened with the Institute Ode and Mary Stuart Collect. Joan McLandress gave the In Memoriam, with Kathy Minnema reciting an old poem. Greetings were made by Dunwich Reeve Peter Hentz, Gladys Egelton, president of London area; Ann McLean, President of Elgin West District; Pauline Lindsay, President of Elgin County Rally; Betty Van Patter, President of Elgin East District and Willa Johnston, Provincial Director Sub 22.

The guest speaker for the evening was FWIO President Marg Harris was introduced by Sally McIntyre.

History

The following is a history of the Wallacetown W. I. compiled by Louie Lackey. The Wallacetown Women's Insti-

tute was organized on July 3rd, 1912 by Mrs. N. J. Hunter from the Department of Agriculture. The meetings were held on the first Thursday of the month and still remain on the same day to this time.

The first president was Mrs. D. W. Graham and the secretary-treasurer was Maude Robb. The first meeting was held in the Town Hall on September 6th, 1912 and it was decided to hold the meetings in the hall during the summer and in the member's homes in the winter. There were 36 members the first year. Miss Minnie Gow, as the first speaker, gave an excellent paper on "Labour Saving Devices" in the home.

A prize was offered at the Wallacetown Fair for the best working mans lunch with the price not to exceed 15 cents and to be sold afterwards.

A motion was passed that Miss Minnie Gow and Mrs. S. Turville be a committee to introduce the ladies at the meetings if not already acquainted.

It wasn't until 1927 that the Institute Ode was used in starting the meeting and in 1949 the Mary Stuart Collect was added. These are still recited as the opening to the meetings today.

During World War I, Wallacetown Women's Institute joined with Dunwich and Southwold to buy a machine gun. In 1923 the W.I. helped to pay for the street lights in Wallacetown. Contributions were made to a large number of funds during the war years and after and still to this time. It was recorded that a sum of \$500 was paid to the Memorial Hospital Extension. During the first years, donations were given to Armenia Relief, Belgium Relief, Chinese Famine, French Red Cross, Greek Refuge Children and Russian Relief.

During both wars the members knitted and sewed, made quilts and packed boxes for overseas. In World War II, women were sent to the "Hostess House" at the Fingal Air Base to serve lunches at night. In 1947, the Blue Cross was started.

Activities for raising money were varied. Lunches for the

fair were put on, later on served meals at the fair which is still done. In the past, concerts, plays, garden parties, bazaars, candy and bake sales were held as well as serving meals today when asked. Other W.I.s were entertained, a practice still done currently, at one time having a picnic with Shedden and Fingal at Port Talbot.

The Wallacetown W.I. has raised \$4,000.00 in various ways including enumerating, working at advance polls and working the election day polls for the 1995 election, also serving dinners with all the proceeds going toward the W.I. History Book which is now in progress. A pledge of \$1,650.00 was made in 1996 to the new Bobier Home. Along with Tyrconnell, Wallacetown W.I. helped furnish a room in the present Bobier Home.

In the early years the hostess served lunch but in 1921 a lunch committee was set up - a 10 cent tea with three articles to be served for lunch at the meetings. Years later the price rose to 25 cents, then 50 cents and at present the cost is \$1.00.

Most meetings have a motto-a roll call and a speaker or tour, all which are planned one year in advance in the programming.

The 15th, 25th, 35th, 50th, 60th 70th, 75th, 80th and the 85th anniversaries of the Wallacetown Women's Institute have been celebrated with guests, cake and a program.



CELEBRATING 85 YEARS—The Wallacetown Women's Institute celebrated its 85th anniversary last Thursday with a special get-together with other branches in the district. Having the honour of cutting the cake were, front row, left to right: Mae Graham and Marjorie Ripley, long-time members, and back row, Wallacetown W. I. President Helen Van Brenk, Provincial Board Director Willa Johnston, and Federated Women's Institute of Ontario President Marg Harris.



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Helping celebrate Wallacetown W.I.'s 85th anniversary recently were: (left to right) Willa Johnston, provincial board director; Mae Graham & Marjorie Ripley, long-time members; Helen Van Brenk, president and Marg Harris, president of the Federated Women's Institute of Ontario.

(C. McLandress)



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Celebrating their 85th- Members of the Wallacetown Women's Institute celebrated their 85th birthday recently with several other area clubs attending the festivities. Seen cutting the ceremonial cake to celebrate the club's milestone are from left to right: Marg Harris, President of the Women's Institute's of Ontario, Marg Harris, Wallacetown members Mae Graham, Marjorie Ripley and Wallacetown Club President Helen VanBrenk.

Wallacetown Women's Institute celebrate 85th birthday in style

Over eighty women from area branches of the Women's Institute gathered at the Wallacetown Community Hall recently to help celebrate the eighty-fifth anniversary of the Wallacetown Women's Institute.

To start the festivities Wallacetown President Helen VanBrenk introduced the club members and the special guests who came to help celebrate the special birthday party.

On hand for the special celebrations were the Reeve of Dunwich Township, Peter Hentz, Mrs. Gladys Egelton, President of the London area, Mrs. Ann McLean, President of the West Elgin District, Mrs. Pauline Lindsay, President of Elgin County Rally, Mrs. Betty Van Patter, President of Elgin East District, Mrs. Willa Johnston, Provincial Director, and the special guest for the evening was Marg Harris the President of the Women's Institute of Ontario.

After the opening ceremony and

a host of tributes by local dignitaries and members of the Institute two of the local branches long time members Mae Graham and Marjorie Ripley had the honour of cutting a special birthday cake made especially for the celebrations.

The Wallacetown Women's Institute has a long illustrious history since it was formed in 1912 by a Mrs. Hunter from the Department of Agriculture.

The first meeting was held on the first Thursday of the month and in keeping with tradition they are still held at this time of the month today.

That first meeting drew 36 members to the club whereas today the Wallacetown branch boasts a membership of 18 members.

The branches first guest speaker was Minnie Gow who gave a talk on the newest labour saving devices in the kitchen, that were available at that time.

During their first year of

operations the branch held a contest at the fair for the best workmans lunch and the prize was 15 cents.

When World War I broke out the Women's Institute of Wallacetown teamed up with Dunwich and Southwold Townships and raised enough money to buy a machine gun for the war effort.

To further their fundraising efforts members started a tea social in 1921 with the price being 10 cents. Over the years the club has had to raise the price of this social event to \$1.

After the war ended and life gradually returned to normal the Wallacetown W.I. supplied the funds to electrify the downtown section of Wallacetown.

In that same year members of the Institute donated \$500 towards an expansion of the Memorial Hospital in St. Thomas.

(Continued on Page 5)

Women's Institute (Continued from Page 1)

The Institute adopted their 'Ode' in 1927 which the members repeat at the opening of every meeting.

When WWII broke out the members of the Institute did their part in supporting the war effort by knitting sweaters, socks and packing boxes with home made goodies for the boys overseas.

After WWII member of the branch adopted the Mary Stewart collect which is now a standard part of the opening ceremonies for the club.

In 1947 Women Institute's across the province experienced a jump in membership as the branches adopted Blue Cross which was a form of medical coverage for members. Many area women joined the Institute at that time so they would have medical coverage.

In 1947 the Institute along with a group of concerned residents from Tyrconnell donated the funds to furnish a room at the current Bobier Home in Dutton.

The Wallacetown Women's Institute currently has a membership of eighteen members and they continue to play an integral part in the development of the area and the recording of the history of Wallacetown.

LOCAL



WI ANNIVERSARY:
 Members of the Wal-
 lacetown Women's Insti-
 tute celebrated their 85th
 anniversary on Thursday,
 May 22 with an evening of
 song and dance. (T-J pho-
 to)



Back Row (from L)

1. Ruby McGugan, 2. Lillian Jones, 3. Joan McLandress, 4. Louie Lackey,
5. Sally McIntyre, 6. Kay Waite, 7. Kathy Minnema, 8. Hellen Van Brenk.

Front Row (from L).

1. JOan Johnston, 2. Kay Lilley, 3. Dorothy Lamb, 4. Mae Graham,

Sitting down.

1. Gladys Graham, 2. Marjorie Ripley.