

Two Districts from Separate WI Areas Amalgamate in Eastern Ontario

It was a historic WI moment. Two eastern Ontario WI Districts that had long belonged to separate WI Areas amalgamated in early June to become the Leeds-Grenville District WI in the Kingston Area.

It made a great deal of sense to merge the two Districts, which lie adjacent to one another in the United Counties of Leeds-Grenville, located along the St. Lawrence River. It had always seemed illogical that Branches in the united counties were split, with Grenville Branches going to Eastern Area and Leeds Branches going to Kingston Area.

As membership dwindled in each District, the seven Branches in Leeds District and the three in Grenville District found themselves working together, most notably hosting a joint WI display at the International Plowing Match, held in Leeds-Grenville County in 2007. They also began inviting each other to Institute events, such as celebrations, annual meetings and day trips.

Informal discussions about merging the two Districts grew more serious in early 2012. The Leeds executive invited the Grenville executive to form a new District within Kingston Area. Each District informed all its Members of the motion to amalgamate. The votes, when held at the two District Annual Meetings in May, were unanimously in favour of amalgamation.

On June 4th, the executives and delegates of both the Grenville and Leeds Districts met in the home of Jean Dowdall, near Brockville, to formalize the merger. Kingston Area Chair Jane Adamson presided and officially installed the blended executive of the new Leeds-Grenville District WI.

To celebrate the amalgamation in high style, 40 Members from both Districts came to Brockville on August 9th to take an evening boat cruise on the St. Lawrence River (during which a special cake was cut) and then to see *The Calendar Girls*, a play based on the sensational and inspiring English WI that posed nude for a fundraising calendar.



*Pictured: Members of Leeds-Grenville District, shown here at the boat dock in Brockville, celebrated their recent amalgamation with a boat tour on the St. Lawrence River, followed by the WI play, *The Calendar Girls*, at the Brockville Arts Centre. Photo by Doreen Barnes for the St. Lawrence EMC.*

That was followed by a September 22nd hands-on Back 2 Basics ROSE Session where chef Moira Vanderwerf, of Lyndhurst, showed about 20 Members how to use herbs and spices in cooking soup, biscuits, shortbread cookies, and ginger ale for the group's lunch. It was a delightful time of chopping, grating, learning and getting to know everyone.

Most recently, the Leeds-Grenville District WI invited Debbie Bauer, FWIO's Membership Coordinator, to give an October 13th workshop on how to increase our Branches' membership.

Leeds-Grenville District WI has 104 Members in 10 Branches: Bishop's Mills, Fairfield, Frankville, Junetown, Lansdowne, Lombardy, Maitland, Philippsville, Roebuck and Tincap.

The minutes and treasury books for each former District were closed as of the end of May and new minute and treasury books were begun for the new District. The Grenville District Tweedsmuir History books will be on file at the Grenville County Historical Society, 400 Railway Street, Prescott, Ontario. Disposition of the Leeds District Tweedsmuir History books has not yet been determined. A new Leeds-Grenville Tweedsmuir History has been started to record the activities and adventures of the reinvigorated Branches of the new District.

FWIO congratulates the Members of Leeds-Grenville District on your very successful amalgamation!