



Pictured: Sylvia Wilding (seated in middle) with fellow WI Members.

Meet the Members

Introducing...Sylvia Wilding

On July 21, 2014, some friends from the Prince and North Tarentorus Branches of the Women's Institute (North Central Area) visited with Sylvia Wilding to help her celebrate her upcoming Birthday on July 25th. They also presented Sylvia with her 70 year WI pin, a certificate and flowers.

Sylvia came to Northern Ontario as a child. In 1928, she married her husband Wes and they lived with her mother-in-law in what was then Korah Township. Wes took the train to Kirkland Lake to find work. When World War II broke out, he moved back to the Soo because the Steel Plant was in "full swing" and there was plenty of work. They built a house on Walter Street and Sylvia accepted an invitation to join the Prince of Wales Branch of the Women's Institute.

Sylvia remembers going to meetings in the winter pushing her baby in a cutter sleigh and in later years, several of the ladies were driven in a neighbour's touring car with their children snuggled under quilts. They met in each other's homes and in those days, there were Home Economists to plan courses and little trips from time to time. Sylvia remembers that one lovely trip was to Ottawa during tulip time.

During the war they knitted socks and baked fruit cakes for "ditty bags" that were sent to the service men. She was not crazy about the rug hooking course, but thoroughly enjoyed the hat making course and made beautiful hats that she wore for years. The ladies also used to volunteer at clinics in the local schools for inoculating children, swabbing their little arms and wiping tears. She was also a 4-H leader when her children got older.

Sylvia actually joined the Women's Institute in 1941, so she is a 73 year Member.

Branch Profile:

Oxdrift WI

Oxdrift WI (Northwestern Area) is one of FWIO's furthest Branches to the north. In fact, it is located closer to the Manitoba boarder than it is to most of the Branches in Ontario! The 8 Members of this Branch live mostly in Oxdrift, Wabigoon or the City of Dryden. The Branch has a long history of helping out in the community. Each year, they make a gift box for the residents of Princess Court Long-Term Care facility, and they make quilts for patients with cancer and other illnesses. The Branch also prepares lunches for funerals and cattleman's suppers. They have assisted with obtaining a new



Pictured: Oxdrift WI Members with guest speaker, Donna Cockle at a recent meeting.

sign for the Oxdrift Cemetery, a bypass at the Oxdrift store and post office, and renovations to the Oxdrift Community Hall. They often extend their help outside of Oxdrift to small neighbouring villages, as well as the City of Dryden.

Always interested in changes that will impact the community, Members recently welcomed guest speaker, Donna Cockle

who explained how the community's 911 calls are now being answered in North Bay - 1,445 kilometers away. Donna is Oxdrift's Fire Chief as well as former Dryden Police Dispatcher, where the 911 calls had previously been handled. Donna's job and 8 others were terminated. The City of Dryden 911 calls are now handled out of Owen Sound.