

SELF-PROFILE:



Designing & Weaving the FWIO Tartan

By Nelda Morrison

I was born and raised in Beamsville, Ontario, and farmed with my husband, John, after we married in 1950. Even though raising three sons and farm work filled my days, my yearning to have a loom of my own didn't go away. My mother wove with linen quite extensively as a young girl; it was the custom then to make a dowry, by hand if possible. I had discovered as a young girl that weaving was an exciting, fulfilling craft. This conviction was reinforced after taking a short course in weaving in 1968.

However, I did find time to join the Union Branch of the Women's Institute in 1957. As well as having held most Branch offices, I was President of the Lincoln District in the early 1970s and of the Hamilton Area in the late 1970s.

After moving to Utterson in the Muskoka District in 1982, I joined Falkenburg WI. Even after my move to Bracebridge four years later, I remained with this Branch. After they disbanded, however, I joined the South Macauley WI. I try to be as active as time allows, participating at Branch and District level and attending provincial and national conventions when possible.

Following the loss of my husband in 1988, I purchased my first loom. I felt life had a new purpose. I immersed myself in weaving books and periodicals and took short courses on weaving and seminars in basketry. In June of 1994, I approached the FWIO President at that time, Donna Russett, expressing my wish to design and weave a tartan to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the WI.

I began the project in January 1996. By the end of February the colours began to fit together. I warped my loom and began to weave. I was pleased with the results. A sample was taken to the Spring Board meeting of the FWIO. In order to register the tartan with the proper authorities, a letter of approval was sent from the FWIO Provincial Office with the tartan sample to the Scottish Tartans Authority in Pitlochry, Scotland. The Certificate of Registration and a sample of the original tartan was presented to the FWIO Board of Directors at the August meeting.

The Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario Tartan will be commercially woven and made available to members throughout Ontario. It is my hope that in 1997 members will proudly wear articles made from the new Tartan to Convention '97 celebrations commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Women's Institutes.

The colours in the FWIO Tartan symbolize the following:

White - snow and clouds

Gold - golden grain that sustained Ontario families in early years

Green - beautiful verdure so evident throughout Ontario

Red - red fruits grown in southern areas

Blue - cornflowers and other cultivated and wild flowers

Black - the trail of the black walnut that led early settlers to Southern Ontario

Nelda Morrison is the designer and weaver of the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario Tartan. She is currently a member of the South Macauley WI in the Muskoka South District.

Volunteering in the '90s

By Karen Hewett

Dictionaries define a volunteer as one who offers a service or a duty of his or her own free will. Volunteer work is given freely, and in most cases is unpaid, involving time and talent instead of money. But volunteer work does have a measurable dollar value and it does contribute substantially to the Gross National Product.

Most people have to work to make a living. When they offer their free time and unpaid labour, their choices tell us what matters most in their communities. Informal volunteer work goes on daily as people occasionally help friends and neighbours. There are volunteers who respond to a crisis, such as a flood or fire, and offer help. But most volunteer work is carried out within the structure of an agency or organization. At any one time in North America, roughly one in four individuals give time and energy to volunteer work.

Why do people volunteer?

- to help others
- to help a cause they believe in
- to do something they like
- to develop their ability to relate to and care for others
- to do work that benefits their children, family and friends
- to improve and give something back to their community
- to feel they have accomplished something
- to achieve personal growth
- to meet people and find new friends
- to use their skills in a new setting

- to learn new skills
- to gain work experience
- to demonstrate commitment related to career goals
- to get out of the house
- to change the status quo
- to stay involved and active
- to experience different life-styles
- to build self-confidence
- to fulfill a tradition
- to be a role model for their children

Why do organizations use volunteers?

- to serve as policy makers, advisors, fund raisers and support providers
- to gain community input
- to gain additional human resources
- to gain additional expertise
- to act as a conduit to other groups
- to access contacts in the corporate world
- to save money
- to assist in fund raising

How do you calculate the value of volunteer time?

- use the minimum hourly wage
- use an estimated national average
- use the average per capita income
- use the average wage
- use the wage for equivalent work
- use the estimated worth of clients

This article, written by Karen Hewett, was reprinted from The Sampler, Lambton County Museum, Oct. 1996.

