

# Good memories for charter member

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Gwen McAndrew has a lot of good memories tied up in the Lacombe Fourpoint Women's Institute. It's been a lot of work, but she doesn't regret one minute of the 50 years as a proud member.

McAndrew, a spry woman in her nineties, is the lone surviving charter member of the club, which was organized in Lacombe in 1946.

It all began in 1939, when her husband John gathered his wife and a group of her friends and asked them to knit and make pyjamas that the Red Cross could send to soldiers fighting overseas. The women kept busy with this until the end of the Second World War in 1945.

Wanting to uphold the enjoyment of each other's company, the women formed a short-lived club, which gave way to a formal W.I. in 1946. No good cause was too small for the club, which boasted a mem-



**Lacombe's Gwen McAndrew--50 year member of W.I., pictured here serving tea.**

bership of 15 or 20 women.

They turned their hands to baking, catering auctions and farm sales, card parties—"Anything to

make money," McAndrew recalls.

"We were busy. Every place I went, I was taking some sort of baking." They made quilts for fire

victims, bought a piano for the Lacombe seniors' lodge, gave cash to the Salvation Army and for cancer research, and once even washed, hung and ironed a mountain of laundry for a newly-widowed man.

"We seemed to be happy in what we were doing," she said. Over the years, she served as club president, vice-president, club reporter, and convener for home economics and agriculture.

She retired from active duty with the club in 1991, but still attends the meetings occasionally, just to keep up.

She believes the W.I. is worthwhile for today's generation, if they can make time to join. "I would say it's very beneficial to them," she said, recalling her own time spent with the club. "It was good for all of us to mix together—it was friendship, really, as it is today.

"We always welcome anybody that wants to come."