



# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2022-2023

### PAST PRESIDENT

Recently, I was looking through my notes and realized that this is my 4<sup>th</sup> year fulfilling my duties as Past-President and Chair of the Nominations Committee.

It has been a pleasure to work with the different members of our club over the last years to fill the positions for the MLUWC Executive Committee. Covid has affected much in our lives, including the MLUWC and our Nominations Committee.

As Past-President and Chair of the Nominating Committee, I am happy to present to you the following slate of Executives for the 2023-2024 year:

#### Executive

President	Nancy Acemian
Vice President CFUW	Mary Vlahos Patricia DuVal
Vice President Membership	Sabra Ledent
Treasurer	Jane Hamilton Weber
Recording Secretary	Sally Gurekian (Exec.),
Recording Secretary General	TBA ( <b>Position needs to be filled</b> )
Communications	Patrice Connolly, Sally Gurekian
Past President	Jane Cowell-Poitras

#### Standing Committee Chairs

Archives	Cendra Paas
Newsletter	Maria de Wolfe
Website	Marianna Newkirk ( <b>see note below</b> )*
Scholarship Committee	Kathleen McGrath,

Hospitality	Theresa Sliz & Halina (Sauva) Slawska
Interest Groups	Vida Guido
Program	Linda Sestock
Fundraising	TBA ( <b><i>Position needs to be filled</i></b> )
Social Media	Linda Sestock
Technology/Zoom	TBA ( <b><i>Position needs to be filled</i></b> )
Potluck Dinners	Carole Newberry, Suzanne Chaussé
Photographer	TBA ( <b><i>Position needs to be filled</i></b> )
GWI/International Rep	Helen Findlay

### **Scholarship Fund**

Chair	Gilda Martinello
Secretary	Heather Hamilton
Treasurer	Susan Pick-Vadivel
Member at Large	Jane Hamilton Weber

### **MCW**

Heather Hamilton  
Maria De Wolfe

### **QC Council**

President	Linda Sestock
RD English	Judy Hopps
RD French	Frances Hudon

As you can see there are still several positions that need to be filled. Contact myself or one of the members of the Nominations Committee to learn more about how you can make a difference to your Club.

Thank you to our Nominations Committee: Nancy Acemian, Mary Vlahos, Heather MacKay, Maria De Wolfe, Patrice Connolly and Jane Cowell-Poitras.

**\*Marianna Newkirk will stay on until someone is found to replace her.**

**Respectfully submitted,  
Linda Sestock  
Past President**

## PRESIDENT

I imagine that in the future, I will be known as the “Covid President”, because my presidency coincided with the worst of the Pandemic! It has been an honour to serve as MLUWC President and I am grateful to have had the experience.

2022-2023 was a transition year for our club. We started holding meetings in person again, and most of the time, we were able to offer a hybrid model (streaming on Zoom) for those who were less comfortable with crowds. Since many of us do not like going out at night during the winter, it was decided to hold both the February and March meetings on Zoom only. Most of our Interest groups also started meeting in person. Things started to feel almost normal – despite occasional flare-ups of Covid-19.

A big thank you to the Program Committee who produced a particularly exciting lineup of speakers. Our kick-off in September with Julius Grey, our Christmas Party, and our March meeting with Thomas Mulcair had particularly large turnouts.

The Executive held 8 meetings since the last AGM. I would like to sincerely thank all our Executive members who worked so hard over the last year. They also generously provided an outstanding array of sweet and savory foods for all to enjoy at the Christmas Party. Thank you to out-going Executive members Linda Sestock, Candice Quinn, Susan Campbell-Fournel, Victoria Pinnell and Marianna Newkirk. We will miss you at our meetings, and we thank you for your service to the club.

I always like to say that our Advocacy Committee is the conscience of our club. The group continued to work with CARE Jeunesse in support of young people aging out of care and collected over \$3,000 in gift cards for them at Christmas. This year they partnered with Cedar Park Elementary School in Pointe-Claire to organize a collection of winter coats for the Resilience Day Shelter that serves the indigenous community near Cabot Square. In conjunction with the Lester B. Pearson School Board, an essay-writing contest was organized by Advocacy.

Our Scholarships and Bursaries Committee assessed dozens of scholarship applications and handed out \$11,200 - \$6,000 in scholarships and \$5,200 in bursaries - to deserving women in our community. We will hear from our Scholarship winners at our Annual General Meeting.

Although the pandemic precluded us from holding many fundraising activities, our faithful membership continued to solidly support the Scholarship Fund. We were also touched and grateful when reading a couple of obituaries of members who had passed away, to find that their families had asked for donations to the Scholarship Fund in lieu of flowers. We were also able to raise some money in conjunction with our Christmas Party and our 65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner.

Despite the pandemic, we have managed to keep our public profile relatively high. We have a beautiful and informative website that is meticulously kept up to date. Our

Facebook page is well-followed. We share CFUW, Advocacy, GWI and local community associations on our Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram pages. Our Newsletter not only goes to members but is widely circulated in the community.

However, not all the news is good. I would be remiss if I did not mention our membership numbers. Our overall numbers have dropped 25% since the start of the pandemic despite attracting about 10 new members every year. I believe there are multiple reasons for this: Unfortunately, several members have died. There were members who only belonged to the club to partake in an in-person interest group (e.g. bridge). When they could no longer participate due to the pandemic, they did not renew their membership. I also believe that despite our best efforts to keep the Club alive on Zoom, it did not meet the needs of people who like to socialize in person. There is an impact on all of us when membership drops significantly. Having fewer members means fewer people to share the fixed costs of the club.

It is my greatest hope that now we are returning “to normal” our former members will return. Membership is everyone’s responsibility. If only a third of us each brought in one new member, we would be back to our pre-pandemic numbers.

As I finish my three-year term, I would like to thank everyone who has supported and assisted me in my role as President. Thanks to Linda Sestock and Patricia DuVal who mentored me throughout my presidency, and to Nancy Acemian, Victoria Pinnell, and Mary Vlahos who always seemed to be there when help and guidance were needed. I am deeply grateful for them all.

**Respectfully submitted,  
Jane Cowell  
President**

## VP CFUW LIAISON

### **CFUW ADVOCACY**

Following the difficulties during the pandemic, CFUW started the National Study Group on Long Term Care, which is collecting stories of Long Term Care (LTC) across the country in order to create a national picture of LTC in Canada.

University Women Helping Afghan Women is an outreach group started by CFUW-Ottawa that has been advocating on behalf of young Afghan women and has provided over 100 scholarships. The return of the Taliban and their recent ban on women attending university has meant a halt to that program, but they are now in talks with a Canadian organization operating in Afghanistan to offer online education.

## **CFUW on Parliament Hill**

- The Department of Justice reached out to CFUW to meet as part of a larger consultation with women's organizations on upcoming changes to the sexual offenders' registry.
- Presented a petition e-4185 on CFUW Resolution on Strengthening Bail Laws to Protect Victims of Inter-partner Violence
- Met with Minister of Public Safety, Marco Mendicino, with the #Women4GunControl Coalition on Bill C-21.
- Presented a submission to the House of Commons Committee on Bill C-35: *An Act for Respecting Early Learning and Child Care*.
- Bill C-226 on Environmental Racism and Justice passed in the House of Commons - Thank you to all those clubs and members who advocated on this important topic!

## **COMMUNICATION**

Technology is playing an increasing role in cross-Canada communication, as well as in getting our name before the public on social media platforms.

The weekly CFUW Newsletter keeps clubs in touch across Canada, allowing coordination between clubs for events such as marches in support of national issues, as well as participation in other clubs' on-line events. It also makes resources readily available for initiatives such as the letter-writing campaign to ban assault-style firearms.

CFUW has also begun hosting webinars for such diverse topics as Elder Action Day and Indigenous Issues

## **CFUW AGM 2023**

The AGM will again be held virtually July 7-9.

The following policy resolutions will be voted on at the national AGM in August:

- Immigration Detention in Canada
- A comprehensive maternal death prevention strategy
- Fair Treatment for Canadians Suffering from Chronic Lyme Disease and Other Tick-borne Diseases
- Impact of international trade agreements

## **CFUW and GWI**

MLUWC has voted to be one of the "opt-in" clubs, and continues to support GWI's international initiatives. GWI held its first-ever electronic triennial meeting in November, with many CFUW members participating. Several CFUW members have also been elected to serve on the GWI Board and committees.

CFUW proposed the following five policy resolutions. All were passed.

- Violence Against Women in Politics
- Post Pandemic Recovery for Women and Girls
- A Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment is a Human Right
- Climate Emergency – Declarations and Action Plans
- Single Use Plastics and Plastic Packaging

### **CFUW and the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW)**

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is the largest gathering of gender equality advocates in the world in which the annual session convenes Ministers, high level government officials and civil Society representatives (e.g. CFUW) to the UN.

CFUW has been accredited since 1998. We contribute to the processes and discussions; and attend meetings, commissions, and the High-Level Platform (HLP) Forum on Sustainable Development. Each year CFUW sends 20 delegates, who self-fund a week to the United Nations attending CSW sessions. Other CFUW members are invited to attend virtually and have access to a multitude of parallel events put on by other global NGOs

This year Canada, Mexico, and the USA hosted a virtual event called *Digital Education: Lessons Learnt and Innovations Introduced*, with a speaker from each country

CFUW also hosted an in-person event on *Even Odds in Digital Education for Marginalized Women and Girls*.

**Respectfully submitted,  
Patricia DuVal and Mary Vlahos  
VP/ Liaison CFUW**

## VP/MEMBERSHIP

Even though there were more in-person meetings our numbers are down again this year. Some members who had not renewed last year because of Covid, started coming back this year as we had more in-person meetings with hybrid options. Hopefully the trend will continue.

Membership numbers for 2022 – 2023:

Total number of members: 155 (a decrease of 6.5% from last year). Of these:

- 5 are Life Members
- 3 are Scholarship Recipients
- 11 are New Members

**Respectfully submitted,  
Nancy Acemian  
VP Membership**

## TREASURER

My first year as treasurer went very well - many thanks to Helen Findlay for helping to make an easy transition to my new post.

The focus for this year has been the continuing deficit the club has been experiencing resulting in the need for a fee increase for the 2023-2024 year.

**Respectfully submitted  
Jane Hamilton Weber  
Treasurer**

## MLUWC SOCIAL MEDIA

**Facebook page** – 660 likes (up from 598 likes) and 747 followers

We advertise our events, share CFUW and GWI news and important community information and social topics.

**Quebec Council of CFUW** - 163 likes (153 last year) and 168 followers – just under 10%

**Instagram Page** - @MLUWC 530 followers (up from 396 followers last year) – over 33%

**MLUWC Networking Group (Private)** - 251 members (up from 236 members last year) – just under 10%

Linked-In **@MLUWC CFUW** 293 connections (up from 259) – just over 10%

Twitter - **@MLUWCWestIsland** 90 followers (up from 83 followers) – just under 10%. Our numbers go up every year. Even for **Twitter** which is not used very often anymore. Event pages were created for all monthly meetings and networking events and are shared in other local social media groups. Other community pages are actively engaged with. Community leaders are often tagged in our posts. Social media collages were shared with the MLUWC newsletter.

Did you know that every time you like and share a social media post you are increasing awareness for the Club?

**Why is social media necessary today?** Many people today do not subscribe to traditional print media and instead often get their news from the internet. Thanks to social media we are able to advertise the MLUWC and our events for free and even attract new members. When we have a fundraiser or event the followers on our social media are advised through social media posts and they in turn share our club news with their social media friends.

We use free sites like Canva to create our media. If you are creative and want to help, let me know.

Thank you to everyone who is on social media and actively participates with MLUWC social media.

**Please send me photos of your MLUWC event or group activity to post to social media.**

There are no monetary costs to our social media exposure – but paid ads could be utilized.

Looking after the social media for the MLUWC does take woman power and assistance would be appreciated. If you are on Facebook or Instagram we need members to like and share our posts and we need people who are active on social media to volunteer. Let me know if you would like to help.

Facebook Page Overview snapshot in the last 28 days (March-April 2023)

Followers: 747

Last 28 days ,Post reach783, Post Engagement 177 New Page likes. 5 New followers

**Respectfully submitted.**  
**Linda Sestock**  
**Social Media Coordinator**



## REPORTS FROM STANDING COMMITTEES

### ADVOCACY COMMITTEE

We started the year in October by taking part in the “Orange Campaign”, asking municipalities of the West Island to light up their billboards or buildings in orange in protest to “violence against women”.

In November we reached out to W.I. elementary schools to organize a drive of snowsuits to be collected by their students. We were pleasantly surprised to see how seriously the students took their task.

We heard from a couple of them that attended our general meeting and gave us their views and thoughts.

For December, as in the past years, we collected gift cards for C.A.R.E. Jeunesse. We raised the astonishing amount of \$3,045.

Nazanin Afshin-Jam spoke to us about the plight of the Iranian Women.

In the new year (2023) we launched an Essay contest on “climate change” for grade 5 and 6 students into the Lester B. Pearson School Board. This contest was spearheaded by Maria De Wolfe. We received 97 essays, which Barbara Armbruster and Renate Sutherland painstakingly evaluated. The top three students were awarded \$200.00, \$100.00 and \$50.00 respectively, as well as, an honourable mention for another student. The monetary awards were generously donated by Halina Slawska. The awards were presented in person on April 25, 2023.

We would like to thank Maria, Barbara, and Renate for working so diligently and giving so much of their time to this project and Halina for her generosity in making it happen.

In May, we will have our collection of toiletries for West Island Women’s Shelter that will coincide with Mother’s Day

It has been a pleasure working with such dedicated and generous ladies and we thank you all for your participation.

Wishing you all a pleasant and safe summer.

**Respectfully submitted,  
Patricia DuVal and Mary Vlahos  
Co- Chairs**

## ARCHIVES

This past year the task was to utilize Google Drive to preserve current data and to continue to digitize historical material. Some challenges have been learning a new approach to information preservation on Google Drive, converting outdated digital preservation methods of historical material (CDs), and accessing the archives which are in storage in the basement/crawlspace of West Island Community Shares building.

**Respectfully submitted,  
Cendra Paas**

## FUNDRAISING

The MLUWC encourages education and life-long learning by awarding scholarships and bursaries to qualified and deserving West Island women. To this end, the Fundraising Committee sought to meet the 2022-2023 Scholarship Fund objective by raising \$11,200.00.

In recent years, fundraising has taken on a whole new dimension. It requires non-profit clubs to become creative in how funds are raised amidst ever-challenging world and market conditions.

In past years the Club would host two major fundraisers. This year it was decided to hold smaller events / activities, thus ensuring the objective would be met during these uncertain times.

A Scholarship Fundraising Drive was conducted from September 2022 until April 2023. It proved to be very successful thanks to generous and supportive club members, as well as those from the community at large.

Games Day was unfortunately cancelled in November for the second consecutive year due to low registration numbers. Those members who had registered kindly donated their ticket fee to the Scholarship Fund.

Raffles, a Bake Sale, the sale of "Members Night" crafts at the General meetings, Senior Discovery Tours rebates, as well as Networking evenings throughout the year, generated substantial funds.

A new venture was the Beau Blooms fundraiser held on April 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>. A substantial number of orders were received and thanks to proprietor Christine Gurekian's effort and generosity, the equivalent of 3.2 bursaries was raised.

The Club's 65<sup>th</sup> Gala Anniversary dinner on April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2023, was a delightful evening enjoyed by all 61 guests in attendance. This celebration and fundraiser allowed the club to exceed the 2022-2023 Club objective. A special thank you must be extended to the Gala Organizing Committee; Jane Cowell, Nancy Acemian and Mary Vlahos whose tireless effort and dedication ensured a memorable evening for all. The Scholarship Fund presently shows a year-end balance of \$ 12,573.00.

Congratulations to all members for another successful fundraising year. As the year ends, I would like to sincerely thank our Fundraising Committee: Anne Brohan, Sally Gurekian, Carole Newberry and Mary Vlahos for their support and dedication, allowing us to once again uphold our club's scholarship mandate.

**Respectfully submitted,**  
**Victoria Pinnell**  
**Chair**

## HOSPITALITY

Quite a year! We were finally able to resume in-person meetings. And what a delight to see so many members in attendance.

Our year began in September with the convivium where 55 members attended in-person and an additional 67 were with us on-line. We partook of boxed delights provided by Marookies and we toasted with a glass of wine.

The October meeting was sadly cancelled as at the last minute the guest speaker was unable to be with us.

November's meeting was a delightful virtual visit to Glen Villa Art Garden, North Hatley. The speaker Pat Webster described the evolution of the garden that she and husband, journalist Norman Webster designed and perfected over many years. The 45 members enjoyed the visit along with tea, coffee and cookies provided.

December was just as remarkable. For a change of pace, the executive members provided all refreshments. Over 50 members enjoyed a variety of sweet and savory nibbles as well as mulled white and red wine. All while enjoying a lovely all female choir. January was the home potluck event in members' homes; February and March were on-line only meetings.

April was members evening where several members spoke of their particular special interests and several members displayed works, they crafted and created. Tea, coffee, and cookies provided.

At the time of this writing, we await the Annual General Meeting. Unfortunately, due to a flood in the Cedar Park Church the daycare has been relocated to the hall where we usually meet. Members will be welcomed in the sacristy, but unfortunately serving cake in that location will not be possible. However, tea, coffee and cookies will be provided.

Respectfully submitted,  
Theresa Sliz  
Chair

## MONTREAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN (MCW/CFM)

In 1893, Lady Aberdeen, President of the International Council of Women (ICW), founded the National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC) and the Montreal Council of Women (MCW). The organization's focus at that time was on improving all aspects of the lives of Montreal's women, their families and the community by better hospitals, improved working conditions, better maternal and child care. 130 years later, MCW, as a non-partisan coalition of organizations and individual members continues to play an important role as a voice for all women in Montreal and the surrounding areas.

As MLUWC is a federate member of MCW, all MLUWC members are welcome to participate in all MCW events. This year MCW Advocacy Events were held virtually on Zoom and recordings are available under the Events tab at [montrealcouncilofwomen.ca](http://montrealcouncilofwomen.ca).

***Teaching Empathy: A tool to Reduce Polarization and a Pathway to Inclusiveness and Tolerance (September 8<sup>th</sup>):*** Janique Johnson-Lafleur from McGill University and Diana Miconi from Université de Montréal discussed how an increase in social polarization and violence in societies and schools impacts the development and well-being of young people and how schools can develop empathy among students and promote individual and collective well-being.

***Women's Economic Inequality (October 6<sup>th</sup>):*** While Canada can celebrate Women's History Month, there continues to be a lack of employment equality, impediments with job segregation, a lack of promotion and pay equity for work of equal value, and no recognition of unpaid work with childcare. The economic effects of racism, violence against women, and poverty have also contributed to a lack of economic gender equality. A panel of experts from across Canada discussed these and other issues impacting women.

***Hear My Voice: Afghan Women speak from Canada and Afghanistan (November 10<sup>th</sup>):*** We learned more about the difficulties that Afghan women encounter both in Canada and inside of Afghanistan; the challenges that Afghan immigrants face coming to a new country; and the trauma of leaving their homes, as well often their families, behind. The speakers also explored the humanitarian and emergency aid AWC initiative for Afghan women in Afghanistan.

***Raise Your Voice (December 8<sup>th</sup>):*** Discussed how one can effectively voice your opinion about current events, defend your views from detractors, and deal with haters. A how-to seminar for women who have always wanted to write a letter to the editor or

op-ed piece, call a radio talk show, or blog, Tweet or post online. With speakers Edie Austin, Gazette Editorial Page Editor, Sarah Deshaies, CJAD 800 content producer and Barbara Kay, National Post contributor.

***The Changing Face of Hunger and Homelessness in Montreal (February 16<sup>th</sup>):***

Guest speakers, Marina Boulos Winton of Chez Doris, Suzanne Scarrow from West Island Mission and Kim Fox from The Depot Community Food Centre in NDG presented an eye-opening session on urban and suburban hunger and homelessness in the Montreal area.

***Bringing The Colour Back into the World (March 9<sup>th</sup>):*** Adrienne Piggott discussed the ways that colorism and racial exclusion impacts and shapes our view of the world, with an emphasis on how this has affected women in particular and how we can begin to “erase the erasure collectively.”

***Women and Climate Change: Addressing the Impact in Europe and North America (April 20<sup>th</sup>):***

The current warming trend is clearly the result of human activities since the mid-1800s (industrial age) and is proceeding at a rate not seen over many recent millennia. It is undeniable that human activities have produced the atmospheric gasses that have trapped more of the Sun’s energy in the Earth’s system. The session discussed the impacts of climate change on women in Europe and North America. Guest speakers were Thalia Valkouma, VP of BPW Thessaloniki Greece & Independent Consultant on Climate Change and Nathalie Daoust, Director of Government Relations, Strategy and Performance at the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC).

***Creating Change: Advocating and Lobbying (April 23<sup>rd</sup>):*** Presented by Maria Peluso, the program provides participants with a deeper understanding of how to find and use their voices to raise awareness, influence legislation, and bring about change in society and better prepare and understand the world of Advocacy. The 2 ½ hour seminar packed with information in four modules with question periods after each and offered by an expert consultant.

In the fall of 2023, MCW is planning a celebration for its 130<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Stay tuned for details of this special event.

**Respectfully submitted,  
Heather Hamilton and Maria De Wolfe  
MCW Representatives**

## NEWSLETTER

The MLUWC newsletter was published 9 times from September 2022 to May 2023. It was emailed to all members and sent by regular post to a few members. It was shared with other clubs. The monthly newsletter is posted on our website.

The newsletter hosted 3 advertisers which earned the club \$300.00 in fees. A poster for Senior Discovery Tours is included in the monthly newsletter. The company does donate to the Scholarship Fund at regular intervals.

Many thanks to our most efficient proofreaders, **Janet Ankcorn and Gilda Martinello**. Without them the newsletter would suffer greatly in terms of quality. Thank you to **Carol Cunnison** who ensured the newsletter was mailed to members who do not have access to email. Thank you to **Marianna Newkirk** for posting our newsletter on the website.

A very special thank you goes to **all members** who took the time to send their contributions as requested. It made being the editor a lot easier.

As we live in a visual world interest groups and committees are encouraged to submit pictures of their activities for publication in the newsletter.

**Respectfully submitted,  
Maria De Wolfe  
Newsletter Editor**

## POTLUCK EVENTS

This year we were finally able to have a few in-person events as Covid-19 cases receded due to mass vaccinations and newer less virulent strains of the virus. However most members were still being very cautious and hesitated to meet in groups in other people's homes.

In total there were 21 persons present at three in-person events i.e.: one lunch at Yolande Martin's, one 5-à -7 event at Linda Sestock's and another 5-à -7 at Sabra Ledent's home.

There was also an online zoom meeting 5-à-7 organized by Nancy Acemian for anyone unable or hesitating to meet in person at this time.

Hopefully by next January 2024 the situation will be such as to allow for many more in-person events.

**Respectfully submitted,  
Carole Newberry & Suzanne Chaussé  
Coordinators**

## PROGRAM

The Program Committee met via Zoom in May 2022 to brainstorm, evaluate, and rank all the suggestions submitted for speakers over the past year. Committee members were assigned responsibilities to invite speakers and then oversee the gathering of the critical information needed to publicize events. In-person general meetings were held at Cedar Park United Church in Pointe-Claire.

Due to the ongoing Covid pandemic, a digital version of the Program Booklet was prepared. The booklet was emailed to all members in good standing, and the list of events with dates and guest speaker names was posted on the MLUWC website.

### ***Invitation procedure***

- An invitation for each general meeting was emailed to members a week before as well as a reminder three days prior to the event.
- For Zoom events, members were required to register for an event to receive the Zoom link.
- The link was emailed 24-hrs before the event only to those members who registered.
- Format of the Zoom and in-person meetings was as follows:
  - Members were asked to join the Zoom meeting by 7:00 pm.
  - 7:00 pm to 7:30 pm was allotted to chat among members
  - For both types of meeting, the meeting began at 7:30 pm
  - Guest speakers generally appeared at 8:00 pm or so, depending on the length of the business meeting.

### ***Monthly meetings***

- *September 7, 2022* – At this in-person general meeting, Maître Julius Grey gave a presentation on the implications of Bill 96.
- *October 3, 2022* – Meeting was cancelled because speaker had family crisis (and it was election night).
- *November 14, 2022* – At this in-person general meeting, Patterson Webster, owner of the Villa Art Garden in North Hatley, described the garden and its history.
- *December 5, 2022* – At this in-person general meeting, the Sweet Adelines entertained members with holiday songs.
- *February 13, 2023* – At this Zoom general meeting, Jeremy Clark, associate professor, Concordia Institute for Information Systems Engineering, described the precautions members should take to ensure their cybersecurity,

- *March 13, 2023* – At this Zoom general meeting, Thomas Mulcair, former MP and leader of the opposition and political commentator, spoke about the political situation in Quebec.
- *April 3, 2023 – Members’ Night.* Several members exhibited their painting, card-making, and quilting projects, and members Jennifer Smart and Kate Hubley spoke about their special projects.
- *May 10, 2023* – This in-person annual general meeting featured Chief Tonya Perron of the Mohawk Council of Kahanwà:ke.

Thanks to all those who contributed to a successful year of programs.

**Respectfully submitted,  
Sabra Ledent  
Chair, Program Committee**

## SCHOLARSHIP AND BURSARY COMMITTEE

As I write this report, the scholarship committee is busy reviewing applications for the 2023-2024 school year. The recipients of the University scholarships will be decided by the end of April and the recipients will be introduced at the AGM on May 10th .

The work of the scholarship committee will continue through May as we review the applications for the John Abbott technical bursary valued at \$600 and the bursaries for students of Centre Jeanne Sauvé and Place Cartier adult learning centers. Eight \$200 bursaries and one \$500 graduation bursary are awarded to students at each of the two adult education centers.

Thank you to the members of this year’s scholarship committee, Maria De Wolfe, Theresa Sliz, Judy Kelley, Cendra Paas, Joyce Schaaf, Linda Ricketts, and Patrice Connolly, for their work in reviewing the applications and for their input into the selection of the candidates.

**Respectfully submitted,  
Kathleen McGrath  
Chair**



## SCHOLARSHIP FUND COMMITTEE

As of April 21, 2023, we raised \$12,573 for the Scholarship Fund which is above our goal of \$12,000. We will be able to provide the scholarships we pledge to hand out every year.

We received several donations in memory of our members that passed away this year, Pamela Deans and Eleanor Shaver.

Since we now have an official French name, we will be able to solicit MNAs in the West Island for contributions to our Fund.

As always, the people who generously donate to the Scholarship Fund throughout the year need to be thanked for their contributions. This includes all those who support the cause by making donations or purchasing tickets to fundraising events. Another source from which we receive money is Senior Discovery Tours – they give us back 4% for every trip booked by a member. If you do travel with Senior Discovery Tours, please let Joyce Schaaf know so that she can inform the tour company.

Thank you also to the members of the Fundraising committee who work hard to fulfill their mandates thereby allowing our Fund to grow.

I must remind everyone that the Scholarship Fund is a separate entity from the Montreal Lakeshore University Women's Club. We have our own constitution and set of by-laws. In no way can the MLUWC take money from our fund to pay for cakes, flowers, or anything else. We are a charitable organization recognized by the Canada Revenue Agency. We do have money invested and it is our goal is to become self-sufficient so that we will no longer have to ask our members for donations and still be able to provide scholarships and bursaries to deserving young women in the West Island.

A heartfelt thank you to the Scholarship Fund Committee. Treasurer, Susan Pick Vadivel, handles banking, issuing receipts and filing the annual charity return. Thanks also to Heather Hamilton as Secretary who still provides me with assistance as I need it; to Kathleen McGrath, as Vice-Chair, and to Jane Hamilton Weber who is our member-at-Large this year. This team of exceptional women help me in my role as Chair of the Scholarship Fund.

**Respectfully submitted,  
Gilda Martinello  
Chair, Scholarship Fund Committee**

## WEBSITE

The Website is a resource that increases the visibility of the Club's activities and facilitates events which range from the monthly meetings, the different advocacy activities and the networking group. It is also a good tool for fundraising for the scholarship fund. In general, there are approximately 500-800 visits to the site per month and each visitor to the site views 2 to 3 pages each visit. We have had an increase in website visits from new people. The club directory pages on the website, which are password protected, continue to be a valuable resource for the members as are the monthly newsletters. *Don't hesitate to visit the website should you need information about future or past activities.*

**Respectfully submitted,  
Marianna Newkirk  
Webmaster**

## INTEREST GROUPS

During the 2022-2023 year most Interest Groups continued to meet either in person or on Zoom. During the year some groups amalgamated to form new Groups:

Bon Appetit and Exploring New Cultures became Dinner Club,

The Travel Group became Armchair Travel meeting exclusively on Zoom,

Evening Book Club II became Afternoon Book Club II meeting at the Pierrefonds Library.

Some groups chose not to meet due to ongoing concerns regarding Covid.

**Respectfully submitted,  
Vida Guido,  
Coordinator**

## **AFTERNOON BOOK DISCUSSION II (Formerly Evening Book Club II)**

Our book club members attended via zoom and in person.  
We read and discussed the following books.:

**“Not a Happy Family”** by Shari Lepena  
**“The Lost Girls of Paris”** by Paw Jenoff  
**“Cold Cold Bones”** by Kathy Reichs  
**“The Rossetti Letters”** by Christi Phillips  
**“The Most English Princess”** by Clare McHugh  
**“The Flight Girls”** by Noelle Salazar

We are a group of seven amazing woman who enjoy meeting and discussing the books we have read. We always enjoy our time together. We welcome and have room for new members.

Happy Reading.

**Respectfully submitted**  
**Luhan Wahbeh**

## **ARMCHAIR TRAVEL (Formerly the Travel Group)**

“Armchair Travel” continues to meet on zoom on the 4<sup>TH</sup> Tuesday of each month with guest speakers presenting. We have 61 members with an average monthly attendance of 30.

In **September** we went back into the archives and I gave a presentation on "Our Asian Adventure" from 2005. Much has changed but the history and scenery of the Orient remain the same.

In **October** Annie Papazian gave us a presentation on her home country of Armenia with pictures and commentary. A new perspective on the country.

**November** saw us visiting Southeast Asia with Jamie Schaaf. A visit through the eyes of a young woman and her friends, backpacking through many interesting and unusual areas of Southeast Asia, which included Cambodia, Indonesia, Thailand, Philippines, and Laos.

**January** brought us to Africa. Gilda Martinello showed us her wonderful pictures of Africa which she took on her recent safari with three other members of our club. The flora and fauna were amazing. A trip of a lifetime!

**February** - Jane Cowell showed us pictures from her four-week tour of France. She took us from Paris on a driving tour to Normandy, down to the wine country in Bordeaux, followed by Toulouse and finally arriving in Provence (Marseille).

**March** - Today, China is very present on the world stage, and we are used to seeing the powerhouse that it has become. A trip to Eastern China in April 1989, just a few months before the Tiananmen uprising showed a very different China, one that on the surface seemed well behind 'the West' but one in which there were hints of the rapid development that was about to happen. Ian Macdonald presented us with an insight to the China of 1989.

**April** - Jennifer Ankcorn gave a presentation on an Amazon Adventure. She and her travel group explored the Ecuadorian Rainforest. At this remotely located sanctuary, over the course of 5 days, they discovered a variety of plant and animal species on their daily guided hikes and canoe rides. From butterflies to tarantulas, giant earthworms to monkeys, there was something for everyone to enjoy.

**May** - Sally Gurekian and Carolina Soulie took us on a trip to mainland Portugal and its Azores Islands. A wonderful end to our yearly travel. We hope that many of you can share your travels next season.

**Respectfully Submitted,  
Joyce Schaaf**

## BOOK DISCUSSION I

We had a very successful year reading and discussing our choices. Some meetings were in members' homes, some on Zoom but all well attended and enjoyed.

Our book choices were:  
“**Lessons in Chemistry**” by Bonnie Garmus

**“What Strange Paradise“** by Omar El Akkad  
**“The Island of Sea Women”** by Lisa See  
**“The Mystery of Agatha Christie”** by Maria Benedict  
**“The Promise”** by Damon Galgut  
**“Extraordinary Canadians”** by Peter Mansbridge  
**“Scarborough”** by Catherine Hernandez  
**“Women Talking”** by Miriam Toews

We are in the process of choosing our books for next year. Our thanks to Clio book store for her suggestions, and Judy and I thank our members for there wonderful hospitality and input Where would we be without books?

**Respectfully submitted,  
Judy Kelley and Marg Nicoll- Griffith**

## **BOOK DISCUSSION II**

This year, Book Club II took the summer months off in order to enjoy other pursuits. Starting again in September, meeting on the third Thursday of every month at 1 p.m. on Zoom, we reviewed the following books:

**“The Paris Bookseller”** by Kerri Maher  
**“Lessons in Chemistry”** by Bonnie Garmus  
**“I Must Betray You”** by Ruta Sepetys  
**“Clementine”** by Sonia Purnell  
**“Violetta”** by Isabel Allende  
**“Still Life”** by Sarah Winman  
**“Skeletons at the Feast”** by Chris Bohjalian  
**“Finding the Mother Tree”** by Suzanne Simard  
**“The Strangler Vine”** by M.J. Carter

We will soon be choosing our books for the 2023-24 year and look forward to perhaps holding our meetings in person once again.

**Respectfully submitted,  
Susan Pick Vadivel**

## **BREAKFAST CLUB**

Since we were unable to meet during COVID the Breakfast Club has resumed meeting on a much more regular basis. So far, the group met three times at different restaurants. The first meeting was at L'Oeufrier during the month of November 2022. Followed by two meetings during the months of February and March 2023. The group met at Maurizio and Allo Mon Coco. We hope to now be able to continue to meet monthly until the beginning of the summer.

**Respectfully submitted,  
Franca Ferrara**

## **COFFEE TIME**

What started off as a “temporary” and informal online gathering to help with Covid isolation has lasted 3 years with a core of about a dozen members attending regularly. We meet every Wednesday for an hour from 10:30am to 11:30am using Zoom. An invite is sent out every week to all MLUWC members. As we meet on Zoom there is no restriction on numbers. The invite includes a proposed topic of discussion of the week (some serious, some funny and some just plain silly) and the Zoom link. Registration is not required. The goal of this group is to offer companionship, friendship and of course lots and lots of laughter.

After 3 years of running this group, it is time for fresh blood to lead it. Marianna Newkirk and Joyce Schaaf have agreed to share the coordination of this interest group. They have already started and will do so until the end of May. Coffee Time will then take a vacation until September and be back under their capable hands with new topics.

Thank you to all who attended on a regular basis and helped make this, a time I looked forward to every week.

**Respectfully submitted,  
Nancy Acemian**

## **DINNER CLUB**

**(Formerly Bon Appetit and Exploring World Cultures)**

This year the Bon Appétit Dining Club and Exploring World Cultures Dinner Club came together as one.

This dynamic and well-supported interest group of forty-seven MLUWC members had a very successful post COVID season of dining out.

On the fourth Thursday of every month, except for December, seven different restaurants in the West Island were visited. One luncheon was cancelled due to poor weather.

Participation ranged from 12 -20 diners an outing. As an alternative to all evening meals, two luncheons were planned, one in February and the other in June. This change was well received by all.

The two remaining restaurants to visit for this year are: Bistro 1834 in Ille Bizard and Restaurant Le Surcouf in Sainte Anne de Bellevue.

Any member who would like to join this vibrant group and enjoy new dining experiences is most welcome.

**Respectfully submitted,  
Sally Gurekian & Victoria Pinnell**

## **DUPLICATE BRIDGE**

Duplicate bridge began again in 2022 with a small number of 9 players. It was decided that two tables could be accommodated in people's homes and that we would meet at 9.30 am on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of the month. We will evaluate our activities at the end of the year and decide whether to continue.

**Respectively submitted,  
Jane Quail**

## **EVENING BOOK DISCUSSION I**

The ten members of our group got together once a month this year, both in person in the fall and spring, and on zoom for winter meetings.

We had lively discussions about the authors and story lines of the books we selected. Here is the list of books and authors we chose this year.

**"Truth Be Told"** by Beverley McLachlin  
**"Big Lies in a Small Town"** by Diane Chamberlain

**“Surviving Savannah”** by Patti Callahan  
**“Still Life”** by Sarah Winman  
**“Once There Were Wolves”** by Charlotte McConaghy  
**“Freezing Order”** by Bill Browder  
**“Looking for Jane”** by Heather Marshall  
**“Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo”** by Taylor Jenkins Reid  
**“The Personal Librarian”** by Marie Benedict and Victoria C. Murray  
**“Five Little Indians”** by Michelle Good  
**“This Is Happiness”** by Niall Williams

We would welcome 2 or 3 new members who may wish to join this group in September.

**Respectfully submitted,  
Linda Ricketts**

## **FRENCH CONVERSATION**

Nous avons encore eu une belle année avec Tête-à-tête. Comme d'habitude nous nous sommes réunis le troisième vendredi du mois pour parler du thème sélectionné.

**Respectfully submitted,  
Janet Anderson**

## **GOURMET III**

For various reasons, we have only been able to meet twice this year. As always, the menus are interesting and delicious, the atmosphere warm and inviting and the company great. We always have a wonderful time.

**Respectfully submitted,  
Jane Hamilton Weber**



## GOURMET IV

After a few years of meeting on Zoom once a month, we started meeting again in person in October of 2022, with a potluck luncheon. Since then, we have had a dinner in November, and two lunches in February and March, with another hopefully in May and a get-together with spouses in June. We have nine members, and we cook in groups of three.

**Respectfully submitted,  
Valerie Fortin**

## JAUNTERS

The apprehension of members about Covid continued this year leading to another year of no jaunts.

Hopefully the 2023-2024 year promises to be a new year with a more endemic approach towards Covid and to getting together.

All those who had indicated interest in this group in the past few years should expect to receive a missive this summer regarding their interest in Jaunters and a request to organize jaunts. We will also ask interested members to confirm their intention to participate in jaunts which include getting together in person.

I am sure that we all look forward to seeing each other again and enjoying all those fun jaunts together!

**Respectfully submitted,  
Chitra Chopra**

## KNIT & CHAT

Our group consists of 12 ladies and is a full group. However, if someone would like to join, they are welcome as we have never been a full group at any meeting. We meet every last Saturday of the month between 1:00 & 4:00 and take turns hosting. We usually serve coffee or tea and cookies or cake. We have started meeting in person but will continue to meet outside, weather permitting, during the summer months.

**Tina Tessari**

## MYSTERY BOOK CLUB

Our meetings take place on the second Wednesday every month and we met from September 2022 to May 2023. All our meetings were all held via Zoom. We currently have 13 members.

These are the mysteries we will have read and reviewed this past year:

**“The Violin Conspiracy** by Brenda Slocum  
**“The Diamond Eye”** by Kate Quinn  
**“The Paris Apartment”** by Lucy Foley  
**“Murder in Old Bombay”** by Nev March  
**“The Heron’s Cry”** by Ann Cleeves  
**“Death at Christy Burke’s”** by Anne Emery  
**“Nine Lives”** by Peter Swanson  
**“The Mimosa Tree Mystery”** by Ovidia Yu  
**“Greenwich Park”** by Katherine Faulkner

Respectfully submitted,  
**Gilda Martinello**

## NETWORKING GROUP

This past year the 2022-2023 Networking Group only met in person. A total of \$330.00 has been raised for the MLUWC Scholarship Fund, so far – we still have events in April and May.

Thank you to everyone who donated to the scholarship fund this past year. The fee was raised from \$20 to \$25 starting February 2023 due to rising costs.

- September 2nd annual mini-golf in Dorval
- September – Studio 77 with Chantal Jacques “Finding my passion with meditation.
- November: Studio 77 – Holiday Networking, raised \$260 in cash and gift cards for CARE Jeunesse
- February – Studio 77 (our largest event of the year) 60 things to do before turning 60 with Susan Williams
- March – Studio 77 with Elizabeth Péladeau, author of My Egregore
- April – Wine Tasting Event at La Souffle de Vie Vineyard in Senneville
- May – to be determined.

We are looking forward to the 2023-2024 season.

Remember to join our Facebook group :  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/352436898159745>  
(MLUWC Networking Group)

**Respectfully submitted**  
**Linda Sestock & Vida Guido**

## OUTDOOR PICKLE BALL

Pickle Ball is a new MLUWC interest group that was formed this past year. We played at Drummond Park in Beaconsfield on Fridays at 9am (to avoid the heat in the summer). The court was always free at that time.

Most of us were first time players. There were a lot of “holes in our racquets” as we missed hitting the ball often at first. As the summer progressed, we seemed to have gotten the hang of it until we encountered a few windy mornings and the ball decided to follow the wind which changed direction while the ball was in mid-air.

A good time was had by all. This group is a non-competitive group, out for companionship, fun, some exercise, and a lot of laughter. We still managed to get some challenging sets in by the end of the season We played until late October.

All agreed that it was a good experience and that we will continue in 2023.

**Respectfully submitted,**  
**Nancy Acemian**

## WINE APPRECIATION II

**Another year of great wine discoveries, terrific food pairings and great conversations at our get togethers!**

Gratefully and happily our group members were able to stay connected throughout this membership season with in-person Wine Appreciation get togethers.

The group’s official “kick-off event” was held in September at *Vignoble-Le Bourg des Cedres* in Les Cedres, Quebec whereby we sampled 7 wines from this vineyard and had a gourmet box-lunch. The owner was so knowledgeable about the region’s historical facts that are actually reflected in the name choices of the wines from this vineyard.

December proved to be a fun in-person get together at *La Maison Verte Restaurant* where we enjoyed a gourmet 3-course lunch of an appetizer, main meal and dessert with each service accompanied by an appropriate wine plus a knowledgeable sommelier that described each of the wines. We had our traditional "Secret Santa" so everyone went home with a small exchange gift to help get more into the Christmas spirit. With prizes to be won, a Holiday Trivia Pursuit game proved to be fun and educational.....Who knew that the first Christmas Cracker had an almond in it?....OR.... The traditional advent wreath has purple and pink ribbon and décor on it?

We still have the rest of the membership season to experience at some of our members' homes with more wine discoveries. We hope to take advantage of some eventually warmer weather to attend these get togethers outdoors as some of our members have wonderful gardens to explore.

In August as a Wrap Up Event of the membership season, Diane Gibb will be hosting the traditional backyard potluck supper/dessert get together.....with wine tasting, of course!

Overall, our Wine Appreciation evenings are well marked by laughter, storytelling, great conversation and growing friendships.... plus the discovery of some terrific wines!

**Respectfully submitted,  
Dianne Gibb**