



## ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024

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### *PAST PRESIDENT*

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As Past-President and Chair of the Nominating Committee, I am happy to present to you the following slate of Executives and Standing Committee Chairs for the 2024-2025 year:

#### **Executive**

President	Nancy Acemian
Vice President CFUW	Mary Vlahos & Patricia DuVal
Vice President Membership	Sabra Ledent
Treasurer	Jane Hamilton Weber
Recording Secretary Executive	Valerie Fortin
Recording Secretary General	Jane Cowell
Past President	Jane Cowell

#### **Standing Committee Chairs**

Advocacy	Mary Vlahos & Patricia DuVal
Archives	Cendra Paas
Communications	Co-Chair + Luhan Wahbeh
Fundraising	Diane Gibb & Mariam Ishak
GWI/International Rep	Helen Findlay
Hospitality	Halina (Suava) Slawska & Sally Gurekian
Interest Groups	Chitra Chopra

Newsletter	Maria De Wolfe
Photographer	Luhan Wahbeh
Potluck Dinners	Linda Ricketts & Suzanne Chaussé
Program	Sonia Serfaty
Scholarship & Bursaries	Kathleen McGrath,
Social Media	Linda Sestock & Anna Maiolo
Technology/Zoom	Tamara Colbeck
Website	Chitra Chopra

### **Scholarship Fund**

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

### **MCW**

Heather Hamilton  
Maria De Wolfe

### **QC Council**

President	TBA
RD English	Judy Hopps
RD French	Frances Hudon

As you can see there are still a few positions that need to be filled. Contact me 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: Diane Gibb, Heather Hamilton, Sabra Ledent and Luhan Wahbeh

**Respectfully submitted,  
Jane Cowell, Past President**

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## PRESIDENT

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My first year as President has been a busy one. Like anyone in a new function, there is a lot to learn. I am, however, grateful for the words of encouragement from many members throughout the year and the support and patience of the members of the Executive and Standing Committees.

2023-2024 felt like things were back to the way they were before the pandemic. General meetings were in person except for the February and March ones, which were on Zoom. The in-person meetings were well attended. I believe this practice will continue in the future, as the weather conditions in these months can be challenging. The upside of this is that it allows us to have guest speakers from outside of Montreal such as, Sara Whittaker this March, who lives in Ottawa. Some interest groups continued to meet on Zoom as they found it more practical, especially during the winter months, but many went back to in-person meetings. This seems to be the new normal, a mix of in-person and Zoom meetings. The Executive meetings were all on Zoom and will remain this way in the coming year. It is a more efficient way of conducting them as we can easily share documents when needed. Another benefit is that it eliminates the travel time to and from.

As is customary, we had our first executive meeting in August and ended with the AGM in May with no executive meeting in December for a total of eight. The challenge this year for the Executive was that by January, three members of the Executive had resigned for personal reasons. This left a gap and resulted in some members of the Executive stepping up and taking on the work of those who left including myself where technology was concerned. I am very grateful to those who did. Thank you to out-going Executive members **Theresa Sliz and Carole Newberry**. We thank you for your service to the club and you will be missed.

Our Advocacy Committee was hard at work again this year. We held a collection of non-perishable foods for the **West Island Mission** which helped make Christmas a bit brighter for needy families. We collected over \$2000 of gift cards for **Care Jeunesse**. The proceed from the gift baskets, which was over \$1600, went to **Vox Aeterna** which will support a project of reconciliation entitled "Nikamu Mamuitun", (Songs That Unite Us) a First Nations and Québécois concert. As is customary, we held a collection for men's warm clothes and blankets for the **Resilience Day Shelter** that serves the indigenous community near Cabot Square. What was different this year, is that we joined forces with **Voitures Européenes D'Autrefois** (VEA) for the collection. A collection of sleepwear for women and children was organized for **The West Island Women's Shelter** for Mother's Day. In conjunction with the Lester B. Pearson School Board, an essay-writing contest was organized by Advocacy once again as last year's was a hit.

Even though we did not have any formal fundraising events this year, there were still donations that came in. They came from Linda Sestock's Networking events, the sale of goods by our

members at our Members' Night and donations directly to the Scholarship Fund through Canada Help by some members. Another influx of donations came from members of our Club and others who responded to requests by families of the departed to donate to the Scholarship Fund in lieu of flowers. We are always touched and grateful for these acts of generosity.

Our strong presence on social media continues. We have an informative website that is kept up to date. Our Facebook page has a high following as does our Instagram. Our LinkedIn page is also very active. On all these platforms we distribute CFUW, Advocacy, GWI and local community associations' news and events. And of course, our monthly Newsletter is read by our members as well as available to the community at large through our webpage.

Retaining membership numbers or even increasing them seems to be an issue for all CFUW clubs and other clubs in general. We are not the exceptions. Once again, our numbers have gone down by 7% over last year, despite having 12 new members join. Our membership is aging, and we need to recruit new members and ideally younger members for an influx of new blood. There is hope that a partnership with the city of Beaconsfield will help in this. We have been asked to host two afternoon tea events for 55+ this summer. This will help increase our visibility and possibly recruit a few new members.

As I complete my first year as President, I see working on increasing our membership numbers and improving how information about CFUW and GWI is shared with our members to be the two areas that need the most attention next year.

I finish off, by saying thank you to Jane Cowell, Linda Sestock and Chitra Chopra who mentored me this first year in my new role and Gilda Martinello and Victoria Pinnell who seemed to never be far when help, guidance and an encouraging word were needed.

It takes a community to run a successful club,

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

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## *VP CFUW LIAISON*

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- University Women Helping Afghan Women is an outreach group started by CFUW Ottawa open to all CFUW members. It has been advocating on behalf of young Afghan women and has provided over 100 scholarships. Since the Taliban's ban on women attending university has meant a halt to that program, they are now working with a Canadian organization operating in Afghanistan to offer online education.
- CFUW currently has two active Study Groups: Long-Term Care & Seniors' Rights and Saving Canada's Public Health Care System which all members can join.
- CFUW also provides template tools for Clubs for Resolutions and other national initiatives:
  - A 16 Days Against GBV toolkit for Clubs.
  - A Housing Think Tank for Clubs
  - A template letter for clubs to use in support of Bill C-64 (Pharmacare)..
  - A template letter form, which will automatically send a letter of support for Bill S-233(Guaranteed basic income) to Senators

### **CFUW ON PARLIAMENT HILL:**

- Met with the Ministry of Seniors Office to look at the best way to have input into the development of the Safe Long Term Care Act and share concerns about Ageing in the Right Place.
- Created a Brief for the House and Senate on Bill C35 on Early Learning and Childcare - to enshrine the funding for \$10/day daycare.
- Sent a letter from National to the Prime Minister & others concerning Israel/Gaza.
- Sent a letter to the Prime Minister and several Ministers supporting Bill S-210, on children's access to sexually explicit materials.
- Sent a letter to the Environment Minister on COP28, for which we received a response from the Minister in January.

### **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 national initiatives.
- CFUW also hosts webinars for such diverse topics as Elder Action Day and Indigenous Issue.

- This year **CAMEUS**, an alliance of CFUW, FEMU (Mexico), and Women Graduates-USA, hosted a virtual event called *Challenge to Empowerment: Experiences and Replicable Strategies of Refugee Women featuring strategies helping refugee women to achieve success in their new countries.*

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

- 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 by the UN. We contribute to the processes and discussions; and attend meetings, and commissions. Each year CFUW sends 20 delegates, who self-fund a week at 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.

The 68th session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW68) took place from March 11 to 22 in New York City. The **priority theme** was *“Accelerating the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by addressing poverty and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective.”*

CFUW also hosted an in-person event Women Rising From Poverty: Strategies, Transformative Educational Projects, Empowering Initiatives.

## **CFUW AGM 2024**

- The AGM will be held in person in Edmonton on July 22-24.
- The following policy resolutions will be voted on at the national AGM in July:
  1. Restore and Preserve Canada’s Peatlands
  2. National Database Documenting the Impact of Unsafe Drinking Water on Health in First Nation Communities
  3. Preserving Deep Sea Ecosystems
  4. Aging in the Right Place: Equitable Resources for all Canadians to Age at Home and in their Community Settings
  5. Incentives to Adopt New Service Standards for Long Term Care

## **CFUW and GWI**

MLUWC is one of the "opt-in" clubs and continues to support GWI's international initiatives.

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

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## ***VP MEMBERSHIP***

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The club's new member total is up slightly this year—15 versus 11 last year. Meanwhile, 14 members did not renew, and 1 passed away. It is hoped that the recent surge in new members will continue.

In 2023–2024, the total number of members was 158. Of these,

- 5 are life members
- 4 are scholarship recipients
- 15 are new members

**Respectfully submitted,  
Sabra Ledent  
VP/Membership**

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## ***TREASURER***

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This year, the club acquired a credit card to use for online payments that require a payment method be left permanently on the web site.

The club continues to operate at a deficit (despite the fee increase) but the executive is continuing to work very hard to keep membership fees at a minimum.

**Respectfully submitted,  
Jane Hamilton Weber  
Treasurer**

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## MLUWC SOCIAL MEDIA

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- **Facebook page** – **681** likes (up from 660 likes) and **785 (up from 747)** followers
- Activity on all pages and sites (except Twitter): advertise all 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 609 followers (up from **530** followers last year) – just under 10%
- **MLUWC Networking Group** (Private) - **261** members (up from 251 members last year) – just under 5%
- **Linked-In** @MLUWC CFUW **328** connections (up from 289) – over 10%
- **X formerly Twitter** - @MLUWCWestIsland **90** followers no increase this year – and rarely used anymore

Our numbers go up every year.

**Event pages** were created for all monthly meetings and networking events and are shared in other local social media groups. We are actively engaged with other community pages. 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, 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.

We continue to use DeepL for bilingual postings.

**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 2024)**

Post reach -  
1,141  
Post Engagement  
236  
New Page likes  
1  
New followers  
5

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

**REPORTS FROM STANDING COMMITTEES**

***ADVOCACY COMMITTEE***

As in past years, we started 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 against gender-based violence.

At the Christmas meeting a car full of non-perishable food was collected for the W.I. Mission.

In December we also collected \$2225.00 gift cards for C.A.R.E. Jeunesse. In addition, fifteen suitcases were donated to help youth transitioning from foster homes.

In January we collected sleeping bags, blankets, men’s winter coats, boots and underwear. This year the Vintage European Automobile Club contributed to the collection and 2 cars full were delivered to Resilience.

MLUWC joined the Canada wide CFUW Coldest Night of the Year Walk on February 24<sup>th</sup>. Kudos to the brave souls that participated. Our team was called MLUWC Snowflakes, and they collected over \$2100 that will go to Logifem to help with the building of 35 permanent residences for women.

In May we are again collecting new sleepwear for the Women's Shelter. This collection can include children's pjs as many women take their children with them to the shelter.

A big thank you to all the ladies who contributed to these projects in different ways. We would not have been able to accomplish all of this without your support.

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

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## **ARCHIVES**

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Archives has introduced a new submission to our monthly newsletters, '**Looking Back to Look Forward-Stories from the Archives**'. The goal is to honour the early members of our club as well as educate our current membership on the historical stories and the work MLUWC has done to help contribute to making our club what it is today. Good progress is being made sorting through archival material and developing a long-term plan for preservation. A special thank you to Irene Crozier who has been an integral part of ongoing archival work.

**Respectfully submitted,**  
**Cendra Paas**

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## **FUNDRAISING**

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There were no fundraising activities this year, but generous donations were received for the Scholarship Fund. Please see Scholarship Fund report for details.

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## *HOSPITALITY*

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A new year and a new venue for our gatherings! This year all our in-person meetings were held in the church of Saint John the Baptist. What a wonderful venue! The church has a large adjacent parking lot and no stairs! The premises offer us a generously sized meeting room with an adjacent fully equipped kitchen and a large entryway. Our kick-off on September 6<sup>th</sup> was well attended and we learned much from our guest speaker Anthony Housefather. This was followed on October 2<sup>nd</sup> by an educational evening about wine with Jordan Lebel. The evening concluded with a wine tasting. Does it get better than that? The plight of women is often not secure, and we were informed of the difficulties many face as described by Gabrielle Barrett of LaSortie on November 13<sup>th</sup>. Our calendar year concluded on December 4<sup>th</sup> with our Christmas meeting and party. We returned to our pre-pandemic format with a raffle of gift baskets from the interest groups and while enjoying the wide variety of tasty treats provided by the members we were entertained by the Lakeshore Community Choir. What a wonderful evening. January was Potluck and February and March were Zoom meetings. We are looking forward to Members' Night meeting on April 8<sup>th</sup>, to be followed by the AGM on May 15<sup>th</sup> when we will meet this year's scholarship recipients. In between, our club will host the Quebec Council on Saturday, April 27<sup>th</sup>. This will be an opportunity to meet members from across the province. Both breakfast and lunch will be provided, In closing we would like to thank all those who attended and were so generous with their time and their help.

**Respectfully submitted,  
Theresa Sliz, Halina Slawska  
Hospitality Coordinators**

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## *MONTREAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN (MCW/CFM)*

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In celebration of its 130<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, the Montreal Council of Women hosted a luncheon on October 19<sup>th</sup>. The event was well attended and paid homage to the Council's founder with an actress playing the role of Lady Aberdeen who emphasized the importance of women's rights and encouraged members to continue the fight.

As MLUWC is a federate member of MCW, all MLUWC members are welcome to participate in all MCW events. Monthly advocacy and social events were held virtually on a wide variety of topics. Recordings of these events are available under the Events tab at [montrealcouncilofwomen.ca](http://montrealcouncilofwomen.ca).

***Addiction: The Growing Crisis We Can't Ignore (September 14<sup>th</sup>)***

***Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder: Hidden Dangers of Pre-natal Alcohol Exposure (September 21<sup>st</sup>)***

***Fighting Back: Challenging the Legault Government in Defense of English Language Education (Oct 5<sup>th</sup>)***

***Financial Literacy: What Women Need to Know (October 1<sup>st</sup>)***

***World Children's Day: How to Protect Children Online (November 20<sup>th</sup>)***

***Project Genesis and the Current Housing Crisis (December 14<sup>th</sup>)***

***Nutritional Optimization for Better Health (January 18<sup>th</sup>)***

***Helping Women in Crisis (February 15<sup>th</sup>)***

***The Dangers of Artificial Intelligence (February 29<sup>th</sup>)***

***Advancing Women's Rights Around the World: Why Collective Action Matters (March 7<sup>th</sup>)***

***Meet the Authors: Ann Lambert and Sandra Rose-Cohen (March 21<sup>st</sup>)***

***Eliminating Violence Against Women (April 4<sup>th</sup>)***

***Preparing our Youth for an Inclusive and Sustainable World (April 18<sup>th</sup>)***: An in-person meeting at Concordia University with a panel discussion featuring Nick Wheeler-Hughes and Hellen Christodoulou, moderated by Sharman Yarnell- Massey

**Respectfully submitted,  
Heather Hamilton  
MCW Representative**

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## **NEWSLETTER**

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The MLUWC newsletter was published nine times from September 2023 to May 2024. 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 three 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 and to Nancy Acemian for technical advice.** Without them the newsletter would suffer greatly in terms of quality. Thank you to **Chitra Chopra** 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**

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## **POTLUCK EVENTS**

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This year we had fifty-five people sign up for our annual in person Potluck Events compared to twenty-two in 2023.

There were seven venues this year: six in the West Island and one in TMR.

In all there were three lunches, three dinners and one “5 á 7” event. There was also one session on Zoom at 11:30 am.

List of the Hostesses and Assistants:

**Lunches:**

Yolande Martin & Marilyn Flaherty  
Suzanne Taylor & Joanne Fraser  
Louise Dagenais & Sandra Smith

**Dinners:**

Lorraine Retfalvi & Connie Ellis  
Marney Macdonald & Valerie Fortin  
Sonia Serfaty & Gilda Martinello

**5 á 7:**

Linda Sestock & Sally Gurekian

**Zoom session** - 4 signed up.

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

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## ***PROGRAM***

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### **Speakers:**

September : Fall Kick-Off, Representing English Montrealers in Ottawa: Anthony Housefather MP

October : An Evening of Wine Jordan Lebel

November : Are Women for Sale – La Sortie Gabrielle Barrett

December : Holiday Event Lakeshore Community Choir

January: Potluck Events (Lunches, Dinners, 5 a 7's, etc.)

February: (Zoom only) Finding Your Climate Why: Action for Transformative Change new speaker

March: (Zoom only) The Business of Beauty Sara Tillman

April: Members' Night: Pilar Espailat, Barbara Lewis, Lori Morrison

May: Annual General Meeting: Introduction of scholarship recipients and guest speaker Marvin Rotrand

Program Committee Members: Jane Cowell-Poitras, Sabra Ledent, Patrice Connolly, Evelyn Horsky, Jennifer Smart, Heather Hamilton, Patricia DuVal, Mary Vlahos

**Respectfully submitted,  
Linda Sestock  
Chair, Program Committee**

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## ***SCHOLARSHIP AND BURSARY COMMITTEE***

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This is a busy time of year for the scholarship committee as we review applications and interview candidates. Selecting the recipients from the many deserving applicants is always a challenge! The selection of scholarship recipients is usually not yet complete when the annual report is prepared which means that the details of the scholarship program for the year are often absent from the report. Here is a brief look back at the awards issued for 2023-2024 scholarship program.

The Amy Williams Scholarship was awarded to Kelsey Beauchamp a McGill Nursing student who entered her second year of the program in September. This scholarship is usually awarded to a John Abbott student but since no applications were received for this scholarship from John Abbott this year, the award was given to a McGill student.

The Margaret Manson Scholarship was awarded to Caitlin Miller, a Concordia student in the Graduate diploma in Music and Creative Arts Therapies.

The Alberta Shearer Scholarship: was awarded to Amandie Fernando, a second year Dentistry student at UQAM .

The "discretionary bursary" was awarded to Joanna Vilme who began the second year of her PhD in psychology with a specialization in neuropsychology at Université de Montreal in September. The bursary was presented as the Diana Nevins Memorial Award since the discretionary bursary (approved by the Executive in 2019) did not have a name and there had been \$4000 in donations in memory of Diana Nevins. At the June 2023 Scholarship Fund meeting, it was decided that going forward the "discretionary bursary" will be named the MLUWC Memorial Award. This award is not given every year but is awarded at the discretion of the scholarship committee.

Eight \$200 bursaries and one \$500 graduation bursary were presented at each of the adult education centres (Place Cartier & Centre Jeanne Sauvé). Exceptionally, two \$600 technical bursaries were presented to John Abbott students instead of the usual one. In total \$13,400 in scholarships and bursaries was given out for the 2023-2024 scholarship program.

I will now focus on scholarship developments for the time of this annual report.

The scholarship application form was revised for the 2024-2025 scholarship year. The form was changed from a fillable pdf to a Google Forms format. Sections of the application form which required applicants to provide detailed financial information were eliminated. There was no way for the committee to verify this information and it was difficult to compare the financial situation of one applicant to another. The financial section of the new application form is now simply a question asking applicants to

explain their financial need. We removed the student number from the application form since it is personal information and is not useful to the committee.

A new scholarship, The Heidi Schaaf Memorial Scholarship, was announced at the March general meeting. The scholarship valued at \$2,500 is being funded by Heidi's brother, Rod Schaaf, and his family for ten years. The first recipient will be announced at 2024 AGM.

As I write this report, the scholarship committee is busy reviewing applications for the 2024-2025 scholarships. Recipients will be introduced at the AGM. Additionally, adult education bursaries totaling \$4200.00 will be given out to students at Place Cartier and Centre Jeanne

Sauvé and the technical bursary (\$600) will be awarded to a John Abbott student in a technical program.

Many thanks to the members of the scholarship committee, Maria DeWolfe, Theresa Sliz, Judy Kelley, Cendra Pass, Linda Ricketts, Joyce Schaaf and Patrice Connolly! Thank you to all MLUWC members for your continued support of the scholarship program.

**Respectfully submitted,  
Kathleen McGrath  
Chair, Scholarship and Bursary Committee**

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### ***SCHOLARSHIP FUND COMMITTEE***

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It had been decided that the Club would not hold any fundraising events this year for the Scholarship Fund.

As of April 15, 2023, we raised \$7,310. Many of the donations were the result of contributions made in memory of those who passed away this year, either members or family members.

As always, the people who generously donate to the Scholarship Fund throughout the year need to be thanked for their contributions. 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.

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, 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**



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## WEBSITE

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The year started out with Marianna Newkirk taking care of the website since I was away all of September 2023 at a time when there is a lot of material that needs updating on the website. Marianna kindly spent some time teaching me how to manage the website which unfortunately is not intuitive in the manner in which it functions.

There have been over 6,000 visits to the website since the beginning of the MLUWC year with more than half of the visits taking place in 2024.

We have now set up a very basic cookie at the access to the website which is required for safeguarding privacy as per compliance with **Loi 25** of the Quebec government. No information is being collected from visits to the website and members and visitors are free to reject some or all the cookies.

Respectfully submitted,  
Chitra Chopra  
Webmaster

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## INTEREST GROUPS

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This year there have been 28 interest groups with most members participating. The groups have all functioned well and most of them also participated in the December general meeting providing gift baskets to raffle for raising funds for this year's MLUWC recipient, Vox Aeterna. Due to some complaints about access to interest groups by members, the following was sent to all members to explain that Interest Groups are a member privilege:

***Participation in Interest Groups is one of the privileges of membership in MLUWC. As such, Interest Groups are only open to members of MLUWC or to joint members. There are also some members who join MLUWC for the sole purpose of access to one interest group. As such, it is particularly disappointing to learn that there are non-members participating in some Interest Groups. Please realize that the January Potluck get-togethers which replace the January General Meeting are also part of MLUWC activities for members only. If there are women who enjoy the activities of MLUWC, please encourage them to become bona fide members by filling out a membership form and paying their annual dues. We would be much obliged if members would adhere to the MLUWC By-Laws in this respect. Waiting lists in interest groups should also be respected. If a space becomes available in an Interest Group, it should go to the first person on the waiting list.***

We look forward to continued member participation in the many interest groups.

**Respectfully submitted,**  
**Chitra Chopra, Interest Group Coordinator**

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## **ARMCHAIR TRAVEL**

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Our meetings are held on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of each month at 7:00pm on Zoom. We are 56 members strong. This year we have travelled the world again.

- September brought us to the beautiful and unique province of Newfoundland. Here we met people and saw the land through the eyes of Joyce Schaaf.
- In October, Pat Jones presented her two-week trip around the coast of Sicily in 2019. She found it to be a microcosm of Italy with its heritage, ruins, pottery, and special dishes.
- In November, the journey continued with Jennifer Ankcorn as we went to the Galapagos. Jenn is a professional scuba diver, and we saw some of the many wonders of the islands, both above and below the ocean.
- At our January meeting, Jane Cowell talked about her cruise around the British Isles. Big cities and small towns were on the agenda of this port-intensive, 12-day cruise.
- In February we traveled vicariously with Nancy Acemian through the ruins in Cappadocia, Turkey. We saw the distinctive “fairy chimneys,” tall, cone-shaped rock formations clustered in Monks Valley, Göreme and elsewhere as well as Bronze Age homes carved into valley walls among other things. We experienced these both on foot and as seen from a hot air balloon.
- March brought to Croatia with Ian MacDonald. He discussed his time in Croatia, with illustrations spanning mid-1996 to mid-2015. Through his eyes we saw a developing and growing country.
- In April we will visit the North and South Islands of New Zealand on a road trip with Debbie Hughes. What a great experience, as seen through the eyes of seasoned travelers!
- May will bring us to Italy as seen through the eyes of Linda Sestock and her husband. Linda spent a week in Rome in January - arriving just before Epiphany and highlights included an Epiphany fair in Piazza Navona featuring la Befana. Linda's visit included a tour of the Vatican and the Sistine Chapel.

**Respectfully Submitted,**  
**Joyce Schaaf**

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## **BOOK CLUB I**

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Book Club 1's tradition is to pre-select our books for the year ahead at an early summer June gathering. Those who are interested in participating in a discussion of reading possibilities prior to this end of year "social" do so and present the suggestions to the whole group. As our dear long-term member, and co-chair, Marg, who sadly passed away in the fall, always reminded us, "Nothing is set in stone". We are always open to changes along the way but do like to know in advance what our monthly books will be so we can plan our year's reading. We also agree on who will host the meetings each month, although this is never set in stone, either! This reading year all of our afternoon meetings have been in person, something we have certainly enjoyed. Our range of books were mystery, contemporary fiction, science fiction, non-fiction, short stories and historical fiction with a range of authors from Canadian, to American, to Polish to Irish and an array of settings – Canadian West Coast and Eastern Townships, London, Spain, Ireland, Poland and somewhere in the dystopian future. Our discussions about our books always lead us to connected topics and life lessons, something we enjoy. We have also surmised that our book club is a friendship group, something we value while our book discussions are, well, an open book! Our final meeting of the year will be June 12, when we'll be celebrating the sunshine, rain or shine.

**Respectfully submitted,  
Judy Kelley**

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## **BOOK CLUB II**

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We are a group of 10 women who meet on the third Thursday of each month. We started off the year meeting in person, following which we opted to meet on Zoom during the snowier months.

The books we reviewed are as follows:

"Empress of the Nile", by Lynne Olson  
"Fayne", by Anne-Marie MacDonald  
"The Bastard of Istanbul", by Elif Shafak  
"The Three Lives of Alix St-Pierre", **by Natasha Lester**  
"George, Nicholas and Wilhelm", by Miranda Carter  
"The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry", by Rachel Joyce  
"A Woman of No Importance", by Sonia Purnell  
"The Mitford Affair", by Marie Benedict

“The Thousand Autumns of Jacob de Zoet”, by David Mitchell

We will soon be selecting our books for next year. It is always a difficult process to choose from the excellent suggestions submitted by our members.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Susan Pick Vadivel**

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### ***BOOK CLUB III***

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Our group of nine members met monthly, having in person meetings in the spring and fall, and returning to the zoom format for the winter months. We are now meeting afternoons, rather than evenings.

The following books were selected and discussed throughout this season:

“Killers of the Flower Moon” by David Grann

“Demon Copperhead” by Barbara Kingsolver

“The Only Woman in the Room” by Marie Benedict

“Trust” by Herman Diaz

“**Dictionary of Lost Words**” by Pip Williams

“Hello Beautiful” by Ann Napolitano

“Brotherless Night” by V.V. Ganeshanathan

“Extraordinary Canadians” by Peter Mansbridge

“Lady Tan’s Circle of Women” by Lisa See

“The Berry Pickers” by Amanda Peters

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

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Linda Ricketts**

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### ***BOOK CLUB IV***

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We met at 1:30pm-3:00pm, every third Wednesday of the month. We met at the Pierrefonds library, on Zoom, or, at one of the member’s home and finally at a restaurant.

We also went together to attend and meet Lesley Chesterman, the author of the cookbook “**Delicious**” where we had a great time and some of us bought her book.

We are six lovely women who enjoy reading books and discussing them. We also have a bit of time to also chat about other issues that may come up. There is always room for new members.

Here are the books that we read in 2023-2024

September: "Lessons in Chemistry" by Bonnie Garmus

October : " L.A. Weather" by Maria M Morris

November: "Anywhere You Run" by Wanda M. Morris

December: "Anywhere You Run" continued

January: "West with Giraffes" by Linda Rutledge

February: "The Guncle" by Steven Rowley

March:" A Thousand Ships" by Natalie Hayiness

April: "The Island of Sea Women" Lisa Sea

May: "Five Little Indians" by Michelle Good

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Luhan Wahbeh**

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### ***BOOK CLUB V: MYSTERY BOOK CLUB***

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Our meetings take place on the second Wednesday every month. We met in person for the first three months of the season and then on Zoom for December, January, February and March. For the last two months of the year (April and May) we will meet in person.

We currently have 13 members.

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

- "Killers of a Certain Age" by Deanna Raybourn
- "Broken Ground" by Val McDermid
- "Symphony of Secrets" by Brendon Slocumb
- "The Echo of Old Books" by Barbara Davis
- "Moonflower Murders" by Anthony Horowitz
- "The Beekeeper's Apprentice" by L. R. King
- "A Shadow of Intelligence" by Oliver Harris
- "The Night Swim" by Megan Goldin

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Gilda Martinello**

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## ***NEW BOOK EXCHANGE***

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After a hiatus of several years due to Covid, the New Book Exchange was resurrected this year. The main goal of this group is to allow people to enjoy the latest books but only having to buy one. There are currently 16 members divided into two sub-groups; every month, each book is rotated within the subgroup and eventually ends up back with the original submitter. The books included mysteries, biographies, fiction and non-fiction.

Several of the books read this year include:

- “Fayne” by Ann-Marie MacDonald
- “Demon Copperfield” by Barbara Kingsolver
- “Killers of the Flower Moon” by David Grann
- “Jackie: Public, Private, Secret” by J. Randy Taraborrelli
- “Five Little Indians” by Michelle Good
- “Horse” by Geraldine Brooks

**Respectfully submitted,  
Gilda Martinello**

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## ***COFFEE TIME***

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All members of the MLUWC in good standing are welcome to join us on Wednesday mornings from 10:30am to 11:30am. Thus membership varies over the year. We recommend that participants pour their favourite brew and join in by Zoom. We have a different topic that is discussed each week and the information about the topic along with the Zoom link is sent out to all members weekly. Sometimes we even do little quizzes to exercise our brains. It is good fun, and the chit chat doesn't always stay on topic, and it is a great opportunity to keep in touch.

**Respectfully submitted,  
Marianna Newkirk, Joyce Schaaf  
Co-leaders**

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## ***DINNER CLUB***

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The Dinner Club is a dynamic and well-supported interest group of 52 MLUWC members who enjoyed one another's company and a wonderful 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 -24 diners an outing. As an alternative to all evening meals, two luncheons were planned, one in February and the other in March. This change was well received by all.

The two remaining restaurants to visit for this year are: Resto Vivaldi in Pierrefonds and Maiko Sushi in Dollard-Des-Ormeaux.

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

**Respectfully submitted,  
Sally Gurekian and Victoria Pinnell  
Co-Chairs**

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## ***DUPLICATE BRIDGE***

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A small group of bridge players from our club meet at 9.30 a.m. on the 2nd and 4th Thursday mornings of the month in members' homes to play duplicate bridge. At our last game in May, we will make a decision to continue next year.

**Respectively submitted,  
Jane Quail**

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## ***FRENCH CONVERSATION***

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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**

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## ***GOURMET II***

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Our group of nine meets in members' homes on the fourth Wednesday of the month, except January, at 6:30 pm. The monthly gourmet dinners function on a rotating basis and are organized by the hostess and two cooks, who share favorite family and gourmet recipes. We enjoy a "Potluck" meal in May.

**Respectfully submitted,  
Renate Sutherland**

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## ***GOURMET III***

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We meet the first Thursday of every month. There are currently six members with three spares.

During the winter months (December, February, and March) we met at lunchtime. We did not meet in January since that is when potlucks are scheduled. This year only one supper was cancelled due to the weather.

Our last meeting will be in June for a night out at a restaurant.

**Respectfully submitted,  
Gilda Martinello**



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## ***GOURMET IV***

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It has been a challenging year, but we did manage to meet for a lunch in October and April and went out to a restaurant for a February lunch. In December, we had a Christmas dinner with spouses. We hope to have one more lunch and an end of the season dinner with spouses in June.

**Respectfully submitted,  
Valerie Fortin**

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## ***JAUNTERS***

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This year Chitra Chopra was the Coordinator of the Jaunters Interest Group, Linda Ricketts wrote the Summary Report, and different members took charge of various events.

**August Jaunt** – Elizabeth Semmelhack

On 23 August thirteen members toured Hudson’s beautiful Greenwood Museum, built in 1732, on the shores of the Ottawa River in Hudson. There was time to visit the historic house, the garden, and vintage garage full of treasures, before lunch at Mon Village Restaurant.

**September Jaunt** – Patricia Jones

The McCord Stewart Museum’s Indigenous Voices Exhibit was visited by nine members on 28 September, where the guide showed highlights of the lives of Canada’s First Nations, Inuit and Metis people and their remarkable adaptation to nature. Lunch followed at Café Notman.

**October Jaunt** – Susan Merrett

A guided tour of La Maison Trestler in Vaudreuil Dorion was enjoyed by nine members on 25 October. We learned about how the house was built in 1798, and the background of the Trestler family descendants. Lunch followed at the restaurant “Patate et Persil”.

**November Jaunt** – Chitra Chopra

The beautiful setting of Notre Dame des Sept. Douleurs Church in Verdun, as part of the candlelight concerts of Montreal, was enjoyed by five members on 24 November. Part of the concert included a musical tribute to Leonard Cohen, played by a string quartet. A true feast for the eyes and the ears during a dark evening!

**February Jaunt** – Jill Rollins

Twelve Jaunters gathered on February 21 at the Pointe-a-Callière Museum in Old Montreal for a guided tour of the exhibit, Exploring the Saint Lawrence. Many fascinating facts and displays followed the mighty river's history. Lunch followed at the newly re-opened Bistro l'Arrivage in the museum, with a beautiful view of the old port.

**April Jaunt** – Gilda Martinello

A tour of St. Andrew and St. Paul Church on Sherbrooke Street was held on April 24. This structure opened in 1932 and boasts beautiful stained-glass windows, and the largest pipe organ in Montreal. We were piped into the church, listened to a small organ recital and learned about the history of the church. Lunch followed at Wienstein & Gavino's on Crescent.

**May Jaunt** – Gilda Martinello

A tour of historic Château Ramezay may take place followed by a lunch at a nearby restaurant in old Montreal.

**June Jaunt** – Jeannie Hazel

Plans are in progress for a Pointe- aux-Trembles ferry ride and summer market visit.

**Respectfully submitted,  
Chitra Chopra**

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***KNIT & CHAT***

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We meet the last Friday of each month but cannot Zoom for this activity when the weather is unfavorable. As the good weather is fast approaching, we will meet either at someone's home or outside when the weather permits. We are a group of twelve but are rarely more than four or five. As a result, anyone who would like to join our Group is welcome. It doesn't have to be only knitters. Any craft you enjoy doing with great company is fine. It's very casual and the hostess usually will serve coffee or tea with cookies. If you would like to be put on the list please let me know.

**Respectfully submitted,  
Tina Tessari**

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## LET'S PLAY GAMES

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This is a new interest group that was created for the 2023/2024 season. I found out there used to be a games interest group in the past. It was before I joined MLUWC in 2019. In any case, our 1<sup>st</sup> meeting was November 14<sup>th</sup> at 2pm. It was voted that we would meet once a month on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month from 2pm to 4pm. We would meet at a different member's home each month.

Two to three members bring munchies, and the hostess provides beverages (tea/coffee/soft drinks/mineral water). To date at each meeting all present played the same game, but if the group size increases next year, there may be more than one game going on at the same time.

Members brought games and we picked a different game each month (Timeline, Chromino, Taboo, just to name a few). At this point it is not clear if we will continue yearlong or break for the summer.

**Respectfully submitted,  
Nancy Acemian**

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## NETWORKING GROUP

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This past year the 2024 Networking Group only met three times and a total of \$195 has been raised for the MLUWC Scholarship Fund this year. Due to time constraints more events could not be planned. If you or someone you know wants to co-chair the Networking Group, please let me know.

The last two events were catered by **Les 3 Soeurs Catering**. The networking group continues to be a great way to advertise the club and attract new members.

**August 31, annual mini golf in Dorval**

**November 1, 2023, at Studio 77** Our general networking night was combined with the New Members Night. Pleasant evening was had by everyone.

**February at Studio 77** with Guest speaker Gina Leola Woolsey shared her journey — from lost in grief to published author, from a condo on the west coast to a high-rise in Montréal, from a formless life to a fabulous plan — and an introduction to her recently published book, *Fifteen Thousand Pieces: a medical examiner's journey through disaster*.

**March – Studio 77** with Fig Fleurs (flower presentation and draw)

We are looking forward to the 2024-2025 season.

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

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

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## ***OUTDOOR PICKLE BALL***

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This was the second year of **Outdoor Pickle Ball**. We continued to play at Drummond Park in Beaconsfield on Fridays at 9am (to avoid the heat in the summer). The single pickle ball court was always free at that time. For most it was our 2<sup>nd</sup> year playing. We had a couple of newbies join us. Somehow, we still had quite a few “holes in our racquets” but less than last year. This year was a bit more difficult to get together as the weather interfered often with our will to play.

Regardless, a good time was had by all. This group remains a non-competitive group, out for companionship, fun, some exercise, and most important a lot of laughter. We played once again until late October.

The good news is that at the end of the season, Beaconsfield painted pickle ball court lines on a second tennis court in Drummond Park, after I requested it. This will be good for 2024 summer, where we will hopefully be enough to have two games going on at the same time.

**Respectfully submitted,  
Nancy Acemian**

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## ***WEST ISLAND WALKS***

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While the walking group continued to exist this past year, with a pre-decided schedule, not too many came out to walk! I suspect that while the spirit was willing, the flesh was weak! I am looking forward to seeing more people at our spring and early summer walks.

**Respectfully submitted,  
Jane Cowell**

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## WINE APPRECIATION GROUP I

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Wine Group 1 members (with a few changes along the way) have been together for well over 20 years now. We have learned so much about the wines, terroirs and even the politics of so many countries. And we are still making new discoveries, sharing much laughter, ideas, and recipes at our 8 meetings. What a delightful year of camaraderie and fine tastings we have had!

**Respectfully submitted,  
Jeannie Hazel**

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## WINE APPRECIATION GROUP II

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Another year of monthly get togethers to discover great wines, terrific food pairings and join in for some great conversations!

The group's official "kick-off event" was held in September at the local *Vignoble Souffle de Vie* in Senneville whereby we sampled 4 wines from this vineyard and had an array of pairing "goodies" to complement the wines.

December proved to be another 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. Served was a special holiday wine-based cocktail plus the appetizer and main meal were accompanied by wonderful pairing wines. We had our traditional "Secret Santa" gift exchange so everyone went home with a thoughtful holiday gift to help get into the Christmas spirit. With prizes to be won, a Holiday game proved to be fun for all.

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 and enjoy.

In August, we will wrap up the season with our 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 continuously growing friendships.... plus of course the discovery of some terrific wines!

**Respectfully submitted,  
Diane Gibb**