



**ANNUAL REPORTS
2020-2021**

PAST PRESIDENT

As Past-President and Chair of the Nominating Committee, I am happy to present to you the following slate of Executives for the 2021-2022 year:

Executive

President	Jane Cowell-Poitras
Vice President CFUW	Mary Vlahos, Patricia DuVal,
Vice President Membership	Nancy Acemian
Treasurer	Helen Findlay, Nicole Larocque
Recording Secretary	Carolyn Cunnison (Exec.), Anne Brohan (Gen.)
Communications	Robin Ouellette, Susan Campbell-Fournel
Past President	Linda Sestock

Standing Committee Chairs

Archives	Amy Dhindsa
Newsletter	Maria de Wolfe
Website	Marianna Newkirk
Scholarship Committee	Kathleen McGrath, Maria deWolfe
Hospitality	Luhan Wahbeh and Tina Tessari
Interest Groups	Franca Ferrera
Program	Sabra Ledent
Fundraising	Victoria Pinnell
Potluck Dinners	Carole Newberry, Suzanne Chaussé
Newsletter Distribution	Carolyn Cunnison
Photographer	Hélène Duquet
GW/International Rep	Mariam Ishak

Scholarship Fund

Chair	Gilda Martinello
Secretary	Heather Hamilton
Treasurer	Rachel Chenier
Member at Large	Jane Hamilton Weber

Montreal Council of Women Maria de Wolfe
Heather Hamilton

Quebec Council

President	Judy Hopps
Regional Director, English	Linda Sestock
Regional Director, French	Anne Lise Dupuis

I would like to thank everyone who has decided to stay on during this odd pandemic year and for everyone who volunteered.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Sestock
Past President & Chair, Nominating Committee

PRESIDENT

This year has been one quite unlike any other, but nonetheless, the MLUWC has managed to be a lifeline for many of us who have been stuck at home during the pandemic. The Executive has worked diligently to maintain programming, and to break the isolation of those living alone. From telephone chains to weekly coffee klatches, monthly meetings with interesting speakers, online interest groups, summer programming, a Christmas party and concert, and an online fundraiser with Gina Cody – the MLUWC has gone virtual! The Wellness Bingo and Walk to Kabul helped to keep us healthy when we were not on the computer! We all pulled together to make it work. I would like to thank the Executive, and in particular Nancy Acemian, who went above and beyond the call of duty and kept us all connected on Zoom.

I would also like to thank the MLUWC members who maintained their membership during this uncertain time, as well as new members who joined us. I am also very grateful to all the generous members who donated funds for our Christmas Charity, The West Island Mission, for all the gift cards received for CARE Jeunesse, for outstanding donations to the Scholarship Fund and the winter coats and goodies for Résilience. Thank you to the Advocacy group who act as the conscience of our Club, and to Chitra Chopra and Barbara Armbruster, who researched and wrote the resolution on the Opioid Crisis that was accepted to be debated at the 2021 CFUW AGM.

The Provincial Council of University Women's Clubs also continued its work, meeting in October (hosted by the AFDU-Montréal) and for the Annual General Meeting in April that we hosted. All members are encouraged to attend these meetings and to learn about our sister clubs throughout Québec. We share ideas about advocacy, fundraising, membership, and other topics.

The CFUW Annual General meeting was also held virtually in June 2020 and attended by Mary Vlahos, Patricia DuVal, Linda Sestock and myself.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Linda Sestock for not only taking on the presidency during the first half of this year, but also for her steadfast support as I began my term as President. Knowing Linda was only a phone call or text away was very reassuring! A big thank you to the Executive for all that they do – I am most grateful to be surrounded by such creative, talented, and hard-working women.

Like all of you, I am looking forward to the day when we can all meet in person. I pray it will be sooner rather than later.

Respectfully submitted,
Jane Cowell-Poitras
President

VP/CFUW LIAISON

CFUW's advocacy priorities for this year were violence against women, early childhood education, indigenous women, and health care, especially elder and long-term care

Due to the COVID19 pandemic, the 2020 Annual General Meeting (AGM), originally scheduled to be held June 18 - 20, 2020 in Ottawa was held electronically. Six resolutions were passed:

- Canada Health Act and Common Application of Medically Necessary Services
- Payday Loans
- Achieving the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action
- Climate Emergency-Declarations and Action Plans
- Protecting Children from Exposure and Access to Pornography and Sexual Violence on the Internet
- Enforcement of the Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act

CFUW had several initiatives to help clubs and members deal with the pandemic, including:

- A virtual book club
- A Zoom account available to all clubs
- Information on virtual events being held by Clubs across Canada

For International Women's Day, CFUW sponsored a free online webinar event with TEMBO Canada (Tanzania Education and Micro-Business Opportunity); an organization to raise awareness and funds to support their Tanzanian partners in providing educational and micro-business opportunities for girls and women. The event, called Eight on Eight, brought together 4 voices from Tanzania and 4 from Canada.

Due to the continuing COVID19 global pandemic, the 65th United Nations Commission on the Status of Women was held electronically March 16-26. CFUW hosted an event called "**Mobilize for Impact**" at the NGO/CSW virtual forum. Panelists were from the University of Toronto, the University of Ottawa, the Feminist Alliance for International Action (FAFIA) and the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAOW).

The 2021 CFUW AGM will also be held electronically, June 25 and June 26. There are four proposed resolutions for consideration at the 2021 AGM:

- Single-use Plastics and Plastic Packaging (CFUW Nepean)
- "Right to Repair" for Large Household Appliances (CFUW Cape Breton)
- Canada's Opioid Crisis (Montréal Lakeshore)
- Post-Pandemic Recovery for Women in Canada (CFUW International Relations Committee)

CFUW and GWI. Unfortunately, there are still clubs not wanting to pay GWI dues, even after Clubs voted at the 2020 AGM vote to stay members of the International organization. As recommended by the CFUW Mediation Report of June 2020, the CFUW Board created a national Communications Committee to develop a communications strategy to improve relationships within our organization and with the specific intent of healing strained relationships.

Respectfully submitted,
Patricia DuVal and Mary Vlahos
Vice Presidents/CFUW Liaison

VP/MEMBERSHIP

MLUWC is experiencing another unusual year with the Covid restrictions. Our members have adapted amazingly well to online meetings via Zoom, be it for our monthly general meetings and the interest group meetings. In fact, there is talk by many interest groups to keep active during the summer months as well as there doesn't seem to be any possibility of gathering in person in the near future. These virtual gatherings have been even more important this past year to help our members fight Covid isolation.

Membership numbers for 2020 – 2021:

Total number of members: 168 (a decrease of 14% from last year). Of these

- 6 are Life Members
- 1 is a Guest Member
- 3 are Students
- 9 are New Members

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Acemian
V.P. Membership

COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLICITY

This term was off to a rocky start as the Corona Virus took its first hit at the world lockdown in March of 2020. Communications had to transition to a new level of contact and publicity on a virtual reality basis.

The entire MLUWC members went to work contributing to moving our contact with community to Zoom virtual meetings and even integrated weekly coffee hours; a Wellness Bingo in the second wave of covid and let's not forget the phone calls that many of us made to those who were isolated during this trying time.

Communications continued on as usual with the posting of events, fundraisers and scholarship applicants and recipients which were sent to local newspapers such as the Pointe-Claire and Beaconsfield Journal which was posted by David Leonardo; The Suburban, through Mike Cohen; The Gazette West Island, handled by John Meagher; the West Island Blog, through Rhonda Massad and Journal Metro (parent company of West de l'Île with Francois Lemieux.

Mike Cohen of the Suburban had asked for a Suburban Zoom Video interview with the recipients of the Scholarship Fund and we are awaiting communication from these young women, to see if a couple of them would be interested in doing this interview.

The MLUWC received a boost of publicity through David Leonardo's (Beaconsfield Journal) press release in his interview with the Past President, Linda Sestock on the Scholarship recipients.

At this time, I am personally working on other contacts that we can publicize our events and activities by using previous lists of contacts, radio stations and other venues. If any of you have old lists of contacts, please get in touch with me.

Let us continue as we enter into the third stage of the pandemic, to stay strong, keeping our minds and hearts open to those who are alone and to reach out to one another in camaraderie,

as women supporting women of all ages and backgrounds in our club and throughout the community.

My personal thanks to so many of the executives and club members for their continued support throughout the year.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Ouellette
Publicity Chair

This past year has been a sad year for so many of our members and their families. Sympathy, Get Well and “Thinking of You” cards were sent out when advised of the need. In 2020, seven sympathy cards were sent. To date in 2021, a total of four cards were sent: two Get Well and two Sympathy Cards

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Campbell-Fournel
Communications Chair

TREASURER

The club’s finances are in a good position, our activities having been transferred to ZOOM due to the pandemic has meant that we did not spend anything on rent, nor refreshments for our General Meetings and since our membership numbers stayed relatively stable, we will have a significant amount of revenue after expenses. There were additional unusual expenses for the cost of Zoom and other software to enable us to keep in touch with our members electronically.

As for preparing a budget and projecting into next year, at this point we anticipate (hope!) that we will be able to return to in-person meetings in the fall, even if at some kind of reduced capacity.

Respectfully submitted,
Helen Findlay
Nicole Larocque
Co-Treasurers

REPORTS FROM THE STANDING COMMITTEES

ARCHIVES

This past year Archives has been on a partial pause. Due to the physical distancing restrictions of the pandemic, we've put the task of digitizing historical material on hold. Our Archiving efforts are focused on maintaining the organization and clear architecture of our documentation on our google drive and this will more concretely take place in the next couple of months.

Respectfully submitted,
Amy Dhindsa

FUNDRAISING

The Montreal Lakeshore University Woman's Club (MLUWC) Scholarship Fund 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 a new 2020-2021 Scholarship Fund objective of \$12,000 up from \$9,800 in 2019-2020.

The annual Fall Fundraiser and General Meetings where funds would normally have been generated, were not held given the COVID-19 Pandemic restrictions which suspended all group gatherings.

Over the past few years, fundraising has taken on a whole new dimension. It requires non-profit clubs such as the MLUWC to become creative in how funds are raised for the scholarship and bursary program amidst ever-challenging world and market conditions. This certainly was the case in the year of COVID.

In response to these social challenges, a virtual Zoom Spring Fundraiser, "A Night of Inspiration" with Dr. Gina Cody was organized on April 22, 2021. Combined with this event and the generous donations from both members and community supporters throughout the year, the Fundraising Committee raised a total of \$13,467, surpassing the set objective.

As the year comes to a close, I would like to sincerely thank our Fundraising Committee: Anne Brohan, Margaret Czalbowska, Sally Gurekian, Jane Edwards, Franca Ferrara, Carole Newberry and Mary Vlahos for their support and dedication, allowing us to once again fulfill our club's scholarship mandate.

Respectfully submitted,
Victoria Pinnell
Chair Fundraising

HOSPITALITY

We have nothing to report for Hospitality as there were no in-person meetings due to COVID-19.

Respectfully submitted
Luhan Wahbeh
Tina Tessari
Hospitality Committee

MONTREAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN (MCW/CFM)

The Montreal Council of Women, directly affiliated with the National Council of Women in Canada, is a non-partisan, non-confessional federation that brings together *36 Federated members, a number of women's and social and community service organizations and 75 individual members from Montreal and surrounding region.*

Because of the ongoing Corona Virus pandemic, all MCW's two monthly meetings, a hybrid of advocacy work and social events programs were all held virtually at 12:00 noon or 5:00 p.m. MLUWC members often attended these monthly events, which responded to the diversity of members and featured interesting and inspirational speakers Treasurer. MCW together with MLUWC were active participants in the "Supporting Senior Women" and "Community Organizations Supporting Women" sessions, sponsored by the West Island Women's Forum the week of March 14th-17th, 2021. MLUWC member Renate Sutherland serves as MCW Treasurer.

This past year, two MCW Emergency Resolutions on "Long term Care and a "Seniors' Bill of Rights" were submitted to the National Council of Women of Canada's (NCWC) AGM in October 2020. Subsequently, MCW also responded to other NCWC's resolutions dealing with climate change, sexual assault forensic exams, Women in the Canadian Forces and promoting Early Childhood Education.

The important advocacy initiative of our President, Penny Rankin, resulted in numerous Advocacy Groups pressuring VISA and MasterCard to cut ties with the Montreal bases company MindGeek and Pornhub-the largest "adult entertainment" website in the world.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS included the **September**, "*Welcome Back*" and an update on the '*Pandemic Journal*' - a celebration of the new MCW website and logo. **October** held a panel discussion on *Bill 21 -The Legalization of Systemic Discrimination with representatives from the Muslim community, a lawyer and a teacher.* At the **November** meeting, our MCW Convenor for Seniors, Miranda Potts, presented a session on "Seniors and Elder Abuse". The "*Holiday Gathering*" in **December** launched the publication of the "MCW Journal of a Pandemic 2020" and with Heidi Ratjen commemorated *the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against Women by Honouring the 31th Anniversary of the 1989 École Polytechnique de Montréal massacre.* During **February's** "Black History Month", Dr. Dorothy Williams, historian and educator, specializing in Black Canadian history presented her on-line tool kit "*The ABC'S of*

Black History". In **March** "A Celebration of International Feminist Energies" highlighted three guest speakers including Wenda Bedard (60 Million Girls), Peggy Edwards (Grandmothers Advocacy Network) and Armene Modi (educator and activist from India) shared their successful advocacy work. In **April**, guest speaker Nicholas Melka shared his interest and work experience in his presentation "The Vital Role of Honeybees in Our Ecosystem."

Social events featured a virtual "Whine and Wine", Cake Artist Cindy Chartier, MWO Stephanie Cyr Women in the Military – MWO Stephanie Cyr, Montreal Author Ann Lambert, and Montreal Artist Claudine Asher.

The Annual General Meeting on May 20th will be a Zoom virtual meeting, followed immediately by "**The Women of the Year Celebration**" (WOTY), honouring MIRANDA POTTS, a Community Health and Outreach Worker for Seniors, for being an outstanding advocate and intervention worker in the Montreal NDG borough. an MCW "Unsung Champion". Registration is required and a donation to this event will be shared with MCW and the "Black Mental Health Connection" organization.

Respectfully submitted,
Renate Sutherland
MCW Representative

NEWSLETTER

By the end of the 2020-21 year, nine newsletters will have been published between September 2020 and May 2021. Each newsletter is distributed via email to the Club's members as well as to our Scholarship recipients and other Quebec clubs. Some members continue to receive a printed copy of the newsletter by regular mail. The newsletter is also published on our website.

Four members placed business card advertisements in the newsletter this year. Of these, two were new advertisers. This netted the Club \$400.

Thanks to my proofreaders: Jane Edwards and Janet Ankcorn. I take full responsibility for any errors that may have appeared in the newsletters. Many thanks also to Carolyn Cunnison for ensuring that those members who do not have access to email receive paper copies.

Respectfully submitted,
Gilda Martinello
Editor, Newsletter

POT LUCK DINNERS

Pot Luck dinners took place virtually on January 18. Our traditional pot-luck dinners were attended by 30 members in the comfort of their homes. Some members opted for dinner,

some for lunch, while others attended both. No matter what the format, a good time was had by all.

Hopefully, next year, we can all return to physical gatherings.

Respectfully submitted,
Carole Newberry & Mary Vlahos
Co-Coordinator, Pot Luck Meals

PROGRAM

The Program committee “met” via Zoom in May 2020 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 for the monthly newsletters, etc. Due to the Covid pandemic, the decision was made to prepare a digital version of the Program Booklet instead of a hard copy one as our Kick-Off was done via Zoom. The complete 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.

Procedure for this pandemic year:

An invitation for each general meeting was emailed to members a week before as well as a reminder 3 days prior to the event. Members were required to register for an event to get the Zoom link. The link was emailed 24-hrs before the event only to those members who registered.

Format of the meeting 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 chit-chat among members
- The business meeting began at 7:30pm
- 8:00 pm (or so, depending on the length of the business meeting) our guest speaker would present.

Monthly meetings:

- *September 16, 2020* – 96 members registered for the event. *Doug Bellevue* gave a presentation on Montreal’s Golden Square Mile.
- *October 5, 2020* – 57 members registered for the event. *Paul Clarke*, Executive Director Action Réfugiés Montréal, gave a presentation *outlining the challenges faced by refugee claimants and sponsored refugees arriving in Canada. Paul Clarke was scheduled for our April 2019 General Meeting which was cancelled due to the pandemic.*
- *November 9, 2020* – 84 members registered for the event. ***Nakuset***, the Executive Director of the Native Women’s Shelter of Montréal, gave a presentation on *The Resilience of Urban*

Indigenous people. As Nakuset mentioned that they were in need of warm clothes for their members, MLUWC organized a warm clothes drive. Thanks to the generosity of our members, 3 car loads of clothes were delivered to Resilience Montreal in Cabot Square.

- *December 7, 2019* – 74 members registered for the event. We heard Christmas carols sung by our member, *Barbara Lewis*, and her guests *Doug Balfour* and *Beverly McGuire*. The songs were pre-recorded to accommodate for bandwidth issues. Barbara would introduce the song and the Zoom host would share the recording. Unfortunately, we were not able to hear all of the songs that evening due to bandwidth issues. Barbara and her colleagues were generous enough to give us access to the recordings online so our members could listen to them on their own at a later date.
- *February 10, 2020* – 79 members registered for the event. *Dr. Jordan LeBel (also known as Dr. Chocolate)*, professor at the John Molson School of Business (Concordia University) where he teaches The Marketing of Food, presented on how to get more pleasure out of our chocolate.
- *March 8, 2020* – 73 members registered for this event. In celebration of International Women's Day this meeting was dedicated to women leaders in our community, and, of course to our members. We started the evening by presentations by *Kemba Mitchell*, Chairperson of the West Island Black Community Association (WIBCA) and *Sarah Ford*, Executive Director of the West Island Women's Center (WIWC). They spoke to us about the work their organizations are doing in the West Island community. The member's night meeting format was modified this year to allow as many members who wanted to participate. Members were invited in a maximum 3-minute block to share something about themselves that we may not know.
- *April 12, 2020* – 69 members registered for this event. *Dr. Marina Klein*, a Professor of Medicine in the Division of Infectious Diseases/Chronic Viral Illnesses Service at the MUHC where she is Research Director, told us everything we needed to know about the *COVID-19 Vaccines*.
- *May 12, 2020* – The Annual Meeting and Dinner this year will not have the "Dinner" component due to the pandemic restrictions. Our guest speaker is to be *Eda Holmes*, Artistic and Executive Director of Centaur Theatre, who is scheduled to talk to us about the challenges of English theater in Montreal. This is a presentation that was scheduled for 2019, but which Eda Holmes agreed to do this year. At the time of this report, we are still waiting for confirmation from Eda Holmes. A last-minute change may be necessary.

New this year: An informal **weekly Zoom Coffee-Time meeting** was scheduled every Wednesday at 10:30 at the suggestion of some members who wanted to meet more than just at the monthly meetings to combat the Covid isolation. The first meeting was on October 7 and

we have been meeting weekly since. There was a core of about 8 members who attended the meeting regularly but we could be as many as 15 members. The discussion topics were fun and light-hearted. Two projects were developed as well:

- *Card exchange*: Those who wanted to participate had their names put into a hat and were randomly assigned the name of a member to whom they would anonymously mail a card. The card could be hand-made or store bought. We then showed off the card we received and had to guess who the card was from. A great time was had by all.
- *Coffee-Time Cookbook*: Those who wanted, sent a recipe to the Program chair, who assembled them into a PDF document and emailed to the Coffee-Time attendees. The cookbook has 20 recipes. The categories that emerged are drinks/beverage, soups, salads, main course and baked goods/desserts.

Thanks, and appreciation are extended to the committee members as overall the speakers were well received and appreciated by the MLUWC members.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Acemian
Chair, Program Committee

SCHOLARSHIP

It is hard to believe sometimes that we have been living under pandemic measures for over a year. Due to the pandemic, the Scholarship committee was obliged to approach granting bursaries and scholarships in a different manner. I am glad to report that the committee was successful in awarding three university scholarships, one university bursary, one bursary for a student in a technical program at John Abbott College (JAC) and 16 bursaries for adult learners. The timeline was modified, and sadly we were unable to attend in-person award ceremonies. Most of the work of the scholarship committee was moved online or on Zoom. Our university scholarship and bursary recipients were introduced at our May 2020 AGM. The effect of the pandemic did have some positive outcomes. We did find that meeting applicants on Zoom was less complicated than arranging meetings in person (looking for a site for interviews, staggering the interview times etc.). As well, scheduling meetings seems less complicated when you do not have to leave your home. These are changes that probably will continue after the pandemic is over.

As I write this report, the committee is currently in the process of reviewing the university applications. By the end of April, we will have chosen the recipients for the year as well as our JAC bursary recipient. In May and early June, we will be awarding the bursaries for the adult learners. If all goes well, we hope to introduce our university scholarship recipients at the AGM in May.

I would like to thank our scholarship committee, Kathleen McGrath, Theresa Sliz, Judy Kelley, Cendra Pas, Joyce Schaaf, Marie-Hélène Gauthier, Linda Ricketts, and Luhan Wahbeh. It is not

the easiest thing to review applications and narrow down the choices from a field of wonderful applicants.

Of course, we would not be able to award the scholarships or bursaries without the financial support of our members through their individual donations and the work of our Fundraising Committee. On behalf of the Scholarship Committee please accept our sincere thanks for your continued commitment to providing support for female students. We would like to thank Heather Hamilton and Rachel Chenier from the Scholarship Fund Committee for their work in managing the fund and preparing cheques. We would like to thank Nancy Acemian for her help in arranging Zoom meetings and Robin Ouellette, MLUWC communication officer. Finally, we would like to send a very big thank you to all who spread the word about the scholarships by word of mouth, social media etc.

Respectfully submitted,
Maria De Wolfe
Chairperson, MLUWC Scholarship Committee

SCHOLARSHIP FUND COMMITTEE

I am very pleased to report that thanks to the generosity of many supporters, the Scholarship Fund is on track to fund all of this year's scholarships and bursaries from donations received despite being unable to hold a major fundraising event. In addition, a major milestone was reached in March when the market value of our TD Wealth Investment surpassed \$200,000.

Due to the pandemic, \$3,800 in bursaries that would normally have been paid out in the last fiscal year (ending May 31, 2020) were deferred to later in 2020. Once all of these amounts were paid and we were confident that there would be enough cash on hand to cover this year's scholarships and bursaries, we transferred \$15,000 into the Investment Account. The fiscal year end for the Fund is May 31 and a full financial report will be published in the September newsletter.

At the time of writing, ticket sales for An Evening with Gina Cody are going well and we are thankful to the Fundraising Committee for their determination to find a way to hold an online fundraising event. We tried something new this year by setting up the tickets sales through the Canada Helps platform which simplifies record keeping and allows donors to receive their tax receipts right away.

As my term as Chair comes to a close, I would like to express my gratitude to everyone who contributes to the success of the Scholarship Fund. This includes all those who support the cause by making donations or purchasing tickets to fundraising events, as well as the members of both the Scholarship committee and the Fundraising committee who adapted to new challenges in order to fulfill their mandates. A heartfelt thank you to the Scholarship Fund Committee. Treasurer, Rachel Chenier handles banking, issuing receipts and filing the annual

charity return. Louise Dagenais has stepped down as Secretary but her contributions to the committee were very much appreciated. Also completing their terms this year are Vice-Chair Maria De Wolfe and Member-at-large Victoria Pinnell. I am especially grateful to have worked with this team of exceptional women.

Respectfully submitted,
Heather Hamilton
Chair, Scholarship Fund Committee

SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook: There are 550 likes with Facebook page - 550 likes – with a reach of 2310 people in the last 30 days and post engagements of 344. We advertise our events, share CFUW and GWI news and important community information and social topics.

- Petition CHSLD - (temporary page) already has 141 likes and in the last 30 days had 1,200 post reach and 216 engagements

Instagram - @MLUWC - 257 followers

MLUWC Networking Group (Private) - 196 members

Linked-In - @MLUWC CFUW - 256 connections

Twitter - @MLUWCWestIsland - 83 followers

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Sestock
Social Media Coordinator

WEBSITE

The Website is a resource that increases the visibility of the Club's activities and facilitates events which range from the monthly talks, the various fundraising and advocacy activities to the networking group. In general, there are approximately 900 visits to the site per month and each visitor to the site views 2 to 3 pages each visit. The club directory pages on the website, which are password protected, continue to be a valuable resource for the members. Due to the pandemic and the prohibition of group meetings many of the activities of the club were by necessity cancelled as of the middle of March 2020 as Zoom based activities became the order of the day.

Don't hesitate to visit the website should you need information about future or past activities.

Respectfully submitted,
Marianna Newkirk
Webmaster

REPORTS FROM INTEREST GROUPS

During 2020-2021, the MLUWC had 28 Interest Groups registered. During the September Kickoff, 11 groups were open to recruit new members. Twelve groups were able to schedule Zoom meetings on the internet with their members. The remaining groups did not meet during the year due to the Covid 19 pandemic. Two new groups were introduced this year: The Walk and Talk group and the Coffee Club group.

Franca Ferrara
Interest Group Chair

ADVOCACY GROUP

To say that this past year was like no other is an understatement. However, we managed to hold our normal activities and projects despite all the adversities that we encountered. We began the year by raising \$436.00 toward a virtual brick wall in support of Ricochet, a drop-in day shelter.

In October we participated in the “Orange Campaign”. Every year we join in protest of “violence against women” by encouraging local municipalities to light up their billboards or buildings in orange.

Later in the year we filled up three cars with warm winter clothing, baked goods and snacks that we delivered to Resilience, an organization that supports homeless Indigenous people. For the Christmas Holidays, once again, we collected gift cards for C.A.R.E. Jeunesse that helps youths transitioning from Foster homes. Most of these cards were accompanied by handwritten notes of encouragement. They were very much appreciated. We collected the unprecedented amount of \$3927.00 in cards.

From March 8 to April 24 we joined other Quebec CFUW Clubs, in solidarity with the Ottawa Club and Netherland Clubs, in a virtual “Walk to Kabul” in support of Afghan Women’s Rights.

All these activities would not have been successful without everyone’s willingness and generosity. A BIG thank you to all our members for their support.

Patricia DuVal and Mary Vlahos

BREAKFAST CLUB

This group did not meet during 2020-21 due to Covid restrictions.

BON APPETIT DINNER CLUB

This group did not meet during 2020-21 due to Covid restrictions.

BOOK DISCUSSION I

To say that this has been an extraordinary year would be an understatement, but we survived, and thrived thanks to the expertise of our Zoom expert, Judy Kelley, and the growing confidence of our members with its use!

Our membership stands at 15, with the average zoom attendance around 10. Discussions were lively, and the fellowship just as important. We had one lovely in-garden meeting between the first and second wave, in early September, and look forward to life getting back to normal and meeting face to face again, very soon.

Here is the list of our book choices reviewed this year.

- Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine, by Gail Honeyman
- The Redhead by the Side of the Road by Anne Tyler
- Where the Crawdads Sing by Delia Owens
- Seven Fallen Feathers by Tanya Talaga
- Big Bear by Rudy Wiebe
- Save me the Plums by Ruth Reichl
- Washington Black by Esi Edugyan
- The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek by Kim Richard
- Chop Suey Nation by Ann Hui
- The Forgotten Home Child by Genevieve Graham
- Quintland Sisters by Shelley Wood

Reading and discussing these interesting and varied books gave everyone some new thoughts to share. We are now choosing our books for next year, with input from Jo-Ann in her new location of the Clio book shop in the Pointe Claire Plaza, (bigger and beautiful) and from our Book Club members.

Thanks to all for keeping us together - happy reading.

Marg Nicoll-Griffith and Judy Kelley

BOOK DISCUSSION II

Another year of interesting book club reading is coming to an end, and we are beginning to select the books we would like to explore next year.

We enjoyed a mix of genres with some Canadian titles, some fiction and non-fiction. All our meetings were attended virtually on the third Thursday of every month.

These are the books we reviewed this year:

- Becoming by Michelle Obama;
- I Always Loved You by Robin Olivera;
- A Long Petal of the Sea by Isabel Allende;

- The Mirror and The Light by Hilary Mantel;
- Bush Runner: The Adventures of Pierre Esprit Radisson by Mark Bourrie;
- Conclave by Robert Harris;
- The Splendid and The Vile by Erik Larson;
- The Spy and The Traitor: The Greatest Espionage Story of the Cold War, by Ben MacIntyre;
- The Push, by Ashley Audrain.

We are currently 11 members. My thanks to the reviewers and members for the great discussions, fun and friendship our book club provided.

Hélène Quaid

BRIDGE – DUPLICATE

This group did not meet during 2020-21 due to Covid restrictions.

EVENING BOOK DISCUSSION I

This year we had 12 active members and we continued to get together once a month to discuss our book selections, taking advantage of Zoom technology to do so. This year's list includes:

- American Dirt by Jeannine Cummins – a Mexican woman and her son are forced to flee violence in Mexico, and her difficult journey to arrive and live in the United States.
- The Henna Artist by Alka Joshi – a young East Indian woman manages to escape her preordained life, and create a new, modern, independent one in spite of many odds.
- The Great Alone by Kristin Hannah – a desperate family's search for a new beginning in the wilderness, only to find there are more challenges than just the environment.
- From the Ashes by Jesse Thistle – story of a native man who from poverty and addiction, finally finds love and happiness through education and perseverance.
- Say Nothing by Patrick Radden Keefe – narrative non-fiction of life in Northern Ireland for families during the "troubles" of the 70's.
- A Good Neighbourhood by Therese Anne Fowler – examines what variables and outcomes are at play when living near people of various backgrounds and values.

Our last 3 selections of the season are Reproduction by Ian Williams, The Other Einstein by Marie Benedict, and The Forgotten Home Child by Genevieve Graham.

Linda Ricketts

EVENING BOOK DISCUSSION II

This club has been meeting via Zoom since last summer. So far we've read: Life Without Water, White Chrysanthemums, Bear Town, Washington Black, Dare To Lead, Nine Perfect Strangers, The Widow of the South, The Gown, The Vanishing Half. We'll end our year by reading American Dirt, Anxious People, and As Bright as Heaven. This group has been co-led by several members.

Amy Dhindsa

EXPLORING WORLD CULTURES

Linda Sestock initiated this year's schedule starting in October; then Sally Gurekian continued to coordinate the following months.

Currently Zoom has provided us with a convenient venue for the 2020-2021 meetings with an interesting variety of World Cultures from around the globe:

- October - Armenia – Nancy Acemian
- November – Basque Country – Maria Korab-Laskowska
- January – Newfoundland – Sarah Ford
- February – South Korea – Sally Gurekian
- March – United Arab Emirates – Cendra Paas
- April – New Zealand – Joyce Schaaf

Each one has provided us with interesting aspects of these special corners of the world. Our hopes would be to schedule the 2021-2022 meetings via the original venue of restaurant choices.

Sally Guerkian

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 discuter du thème sélectionné via Zoom. We met every third Friday of the month and discussed chosen topics via Zoom.

Janet Anderson

GOURMET II

This group did not meet during 2020-21 due to Covid restrictions.

GOURMET III

This group did not meet during 2020-21 due to Covid restrictions.

GOURMET IV

We have nine members, and we cook in groups of three, with dinners normally from October to June. This year has been very different obviously, and we started meeting on Zoom in April and continued once a month through the summer. Eating a meal while on a Zoom call was a challenge, so mostly we just met to chat, often about food! In September we switched to a 5 à 7 Zoom format, with hors d'oeuvres made by each member around a theme, sharing the recipes with the others. In March our theme was finger food dessert and our April meeting the theme was soup.

As we wait for things to return to “normal”, we will continue to share our experiences with take-out, food delivery options, and how we are coping during COVID.

Valerie Fortin

JAUNTERS

This group did not meet during 2020-21 due to Covid restrictions.

KNIT & CHAT

Due to COVID-19 restrictions we have not been meeting. However, when the weather was favorable and groups of ten were allowed to gather, some of us met a few times either at someone's backyard or a park. As soon as we can, we shall try to do that again.

Tina Tessari

MUSIC APPRECIATION

Normally the Music Appreciation Group would attend a series of six morning Montreal Symphony concerts. Due to the pandemic this was not possible. We did meet on zoom several times keeping in touch. Our most significant meeting was with MSO violinists Kathie Palyga and Claire Segal. These two talented women shared their musical experiences behind the scenes. Claire, an MLUWC member, introduced us to Kathie. We thank Claire and Carolina Soulié for making this meeting possible. Also, much appreciation to Nancy Acemian for setting up all Zoom meetings. We look forward to the time when we can once again attend the morning symphony.

Maria Cranker

MUSIC HISTORY

The Music History group has not been meeting formally during the pandemic, but has been remaining active nonetheless, exploiting the wealth of material on YouTube to keep ourselves musically engaged.

YouTube links have been sent out every month around the usual meeting date (2nd Thursday of the month), sometimes in connection with the books being read by Book Club II, which has been active on Zoom, since there is considerable overlap in the membership of the two groups. For example, after we reviewed Hilary Mantel's *The Mirror and the Light*, the link to Lucy Worsley's TV documentary, *Elizabeth I's Battle for God's Music*, was sent out and after Robert Harris's *Conclave*, the link to the episode on Palestrina in Simon Russell Beale's series *Sacred Music* was also sent.

Otherwise, the fall months were occupied with the three-part movie, *The Genius of Beethoven*, in acknowledgment of the 250th anniversary of his birth in December 1771, followed by Simon Russell Beale on Christmas music in December. March and Lent were marked by a documentary on the young Felix Mendelssohn's revival of Bach's *St Matthew Passion* in March 1829, with links to the full work and extracted highlights. April featured Mendelssohn's first visit to Great Britain and his tour of Scotland in the summer of 1829, inspiring his *Scottish Symphony* and the *Hebriden Overture* (Fingal's Cave). Then it will be back to Bach to round out the year.

Joan Dyer

MYSTERY BOOK CLUB

This year's meetings were all held via Zoom due to government restrictions concerning COVID-19.

Although we normally meet from September to May every year, this past year we decided to meet during the summer months as well.

These are the mysteries we will have read and reviewed from June 2020 to May 2021:

- *I'll Never Tell* by Catherine McKenzie
- *The Long Call* by Ann Cleeves
- *The Huntress* by Kate Quinn
- *Eight Perfect Murders* by Peter Swanson
- *The Red Lotus* by Chris Bohjalian
- *The Lost Man* by Jane Harper
- *The Smiling Man* by Joseph Knox
- *Victim 2117* by Jussi Adler-Olsen
- *The Liar's Girl* by Catherine Ryan Howard
- *The Sweetness at the Bottom of the Pie* by Alan Bradley
- *The Chestnut Man* by Soren Svestrup
- *The Decent Inn of Death* by Rennie Airth

Our meetings are scheduled for the second Wednesday of every month. We currently have 13 members.

Gilda Martinello

NETWORKING

The 2020-2021 Networking Group continued to meet on zoom – with a good turnout and we still raised money for the MLUWC Scholarship Fund. Susan Campbell Fournel managed zoom for us and we had the following speakers:

- September: Sonjali Di Guida, “Using Hypnosis for Transformational change”
- October: Lisa Gertsman, Owner, Precision Marketing and Belle Tropicque Natural Skin Care
- November: Taline Nalbandian, Demystifying social media
- January: Darlene Phair, Sante Kor
- February Lilly Rahmann, Natural medicine, specializing in plants and minerals
- March: Cinthya Leyva Mancilla, owner and manager of Tierra Viva Gardens
- May: open networking - either outside or on zoom

We shall continue next year - perhaps a mix of in person and zoom.
Join our Facebook group: MLUWC Networking Group

Linda Sestock and Susan Campbell Fournel

NEW BOOK EXCHANGE

This group did not meet during 2020-21 due to Covid restrictions.

PHOTOGRAPHY

We are currently 13 members. Our monthly photography meetings were held on Zoom. We met on the second Tuesday of each month at 2:00 pm. We had an assignment every month and discussed them in our meetings. We talked about our pictures and photographic techniques. A few members made short presentations.

Maria Korab-Laskowska

TRAVEL

This year our monthly meetings were held on Zoom on the 4th Tuesday of every month at 7.30. The group became very popular. We have 48 members.

Here is this season’s program:

- October 27: Joyce Schaaf presented: A Visit to “The Rock”, diverse Newfoundland.
- November 24: Ian MacDonald took us to Northern British Columbia, part of southeastern Alaska and the Yukon near Whitehorse.
- January 26: Wojtek Skoryna presented "Mount Fuji and the Japanese Experience".

- February 23: Martin Joyal and Chantal Paul presented photos of their trip to Costa Rica called: "The Biodiversity of Costa Rica"
- March 23: This time our member Dianne Robinson shared her experience on "Cycling in Sri Lanka".
- April 27: Margaret Czalbowska presented "Discovering San Miguel (Mexico)".

Ann Arial and Maria Korab-Laskowska

WINE AND CHEESE

This group did not meet during 2020-21 due to Covid restrictions.

WINE APPRECIATION I

The year started off with a summer backyard get together, complete with social distancing, and lugging in our own chairs, tables, nibbles and wines. To celebrate the start of summer, the colour was pink and the wines rosé! To quote the group scribe "Rosés are like friends, just different enough to be interesting! And always in the pink!"

To quote Charles Dickens, "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times..." – the best was that we were able to continue getting together, laughing and sharing, the worst continues as the pandemic rages on and we are forced to limit our get-togethers to Zoom.

The Rosés of summer were followed in the fall by a most amusing, anecdotal and enlightening "wine trivial pursuit" along with a wine of individual choice with everyone suggesting something different. Some suggestions were Cousiño-Macul Antiguas from Chile, Chateau de Cruzeau and Beaujolais-Village de Jadot both from France. And following on the success of the first trivial pursuit, there was another, equally as successful, challenging and fun. Members were encouraged to bring recommendations for wines under \$20. The most suggested were Italian wines: Masciarelli Montepulciano d'Abruzzo, Valpolicello Ripasso, Morellino di Scansano. Christmas arrived with a meeting where members were treated to a virtual tour of a lovely renovated country home complete with an underground cellar. Unfortunately, the Wi-Fi could not penetrate the walls and so we await an actual tour of the cellar.

The New Year brought with it a tasting of Canadian wines, with members choosing to present Quebec, Ontario, BC and Nova Scotia wines. Particularly recommended were Queylus (pronounced "Kluse") from the Niagara region, Pétales d'Osoyoos from the Okanagan Valley in BC, and Tidal Bay from Jost in Nova Scotia. And then along came February when we shared a Valentine's Day Zoom supper and dessert complemented with wines of choice. We heard about the very successful Palliative Care Valentines Ball, a wonderful London dinner, meals ordered in from Le Gourmand and Bistro 1843, special home-cooked dinners including fondue, duck confit, lamb, veal and all the accompaniments. However, "chocolate" dominated the evening with recommendations for Cotard Chocolatier Glacier in Saint Sauveur, Peace for Chocolate in Nova Scotia, Chocolate Tofino in BC, Les Chocolats de Chloé in Montreal, and Fabelle from India. This left us all hankering for a dessert party. Next came an evening of Portuguese wines on St. Patrick's Day along with another successful "wine trivial pursuit" with wines suggested for

tasting and sharing chosen primarily from the Douro and Lisbon regions. The year will be rounded off by a final evening celebrating the unseasonably early spring with optimism and tastings of bubbly of choice – Champagne, Prosecco, Cava, Crémant etc.

We have tasted a great many lovely wines over the year. With any luck 2022 will bring with it an opportunity to get together in person and to more amply enjoy the camaraderie of this very special group of women and taste the wines they recommend.

Chitra Chopra

WINE APPRECIATION II

We are a group of eight regular members and three spare members who fill in if a regular member is absent for a specific evening.

At the end of August in 2020 as COVID-19 restrictions were lessened, all regular and spare members were invited to meet with social distancing in the backyard of one of our members, Sheila Parkins. What a treat to actually have been all together for a wine tasting session on the river front with take-out pizza accompanied by a beautiful sunset! (Thank you, Sheila!).

Although the resumed high restrictions for COVID-19 did put a damper on our possible future in-person meetings, the group decided that all regular and spare members could meet virtually every second month (October, December, February, April and June). Our summer schedule will then be decided in June and we look forward to perhaps getting together “live” throughout the summer.

Our group virtual meetings were hosted by one person with just one wine selected to experience. Each member of the group bought the suggested wine and prepared whatever pairing she decided on...a different concept but at least we did get to see each other and have wonderful conversations in addition to discovering new wines. Overall, our Wine Appreciation evenings are well marked by laughter, storytelling, great conversation and growing friendships!

Diane Gibb