



**ANNUAL REPORTS
2019-2020**

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 2020-2021 year:

Executive

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

Standing Committee Chairs

Archives	Amy Dhindsa
Newsletter	Gilda Martinello
Website	Marianna Newkirk
Scholarship Committee	Maria de Wolfe & Sabra Ledent
Hospitality	Luhan Wahbeh and Tina Tessari
Interest Groups	Franca Ferrera
Program	Nancy Acemian
Fundraising	Victoria Pinnell

Potluck Dinners Mary Vlahos, Carole Newberry

Newsletter Distribution Carolyn Cunnison
Photographer H  l  ne Duquet

Scholarship Fund
Chair Heather Hamilton
Treasurer Rachel Chenier

MCW
WICRC

Renate Sutherland
to be confirmed

QC Council positions to be voted on at the end of April: President, RD English, RD French.

I would like to thank Barbara Armbruster, Mary Vlahos, Patricia DuVal, Victoria Pinnell and Renate Sutherland for their wonderful collaboration during this pandemic. We had one meeting in person and another 3 meetings via zoom.

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

PRESIDENT

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Gilda Martinello for being co-President with me during my 4th year as President.

This year we experienced our highest number of new members and many of our new members have already taken or are about to take on a volunteer role within the MLUWC. This is thanks to members talking about the MLUWC to their friends, our Fundraising Events, Networking Group and Advocacy within the community.

This past year we had our first executive meeting at Grill Select and included our current, outgoing and incoming executive members. Monthly meetings were held at Residence le Selection and we switched to online meetings through Zoom because of COVID-19.

Some of our achievements included a fun Fall Fundraising event where we enjoyed good food and great musical entertainment, our Christmas meeting and concert, and our ever-popular interest groups (new and existing groups).

Word of our Club and who we are is continuing to spread through networking and our social media presence (newspaper articles, LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook and now Instagram). Thanks to our Communications Chair, we appeared in local papers on the West Island.

We helped various local communities including West Island Community Shares, CARE Jeunesse and AJOI/Ricochet (Homeless shelter for young adults on the West Island). Thank you to everyone who works so hard to make our Club so successful.

CFUW Involvement: several MLUWC members were present at the CFUW AGM in Winnipeg (where the CFUW was founded in 1919 to support GWI) to celebrate the CFUW's 100th Anniversary: Renate Sutherland and Elizabeth Semmelhaack (2 of the 100 Notable Women), Helen Findlay, Patricia DuVal, Jane Cowell-Poitras and Leah Trineer (dual member and co-President of the Montreal Club), in addition to myself.

The Quebec Council – which includes the 6 CFUW clubs across Quebec meets twice a year. The Fall Meeting was hosted by the Sherbrooke Club and the Quebec City Club will host the spring AGM online. These meetings are an important way to learn about our sister clubs throughout Québec. We share ideas about advocacy, fundraising, membership and other topics. I encourage all of you to attend the Quebec Council meetings in the future.

Thank you to everyone who has supported and assisted us in our roles as President – we can only be as good as our fellow members, volunteers and Executive members.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Sestock
President

VP/CFUW LIAISON

CFUW's advocacy priorities for this year were *violence against women, early childhood education, and indigenous women*.

CFUW celebrated its 100th Anniversary in 2019. The AGM was held August 15-17 in Winnipeg, where CFUW was founded. As part of the celebration, awards were presented to 100 Notable Women from Clubs across the country. A writer has been hired to prepare a history of the 100 years of CFUW and a record of its efforts in advancing equality for women and girls. An Anniversary toolkit was sent to clubs. There were no Resolutions to be voted on at the 2019 AGM but Motions were approved to change the CFUW by-laws in order for the Members-at-Large group to become an eClub.

Two new virtual clubs were started this year: AFDU Montérégie, a francophone club in Quebec; and a virtual club whose focus will be on GWI activities. These clubs are open to interested women anywhere in Canada.

Since 2019 was an election year, CFUW Advocacy prepared questions on several topics for use at All-Candidates Meetings. We used the questions on Homelessness and Indigenous Women at MLUWC's All Candidate's Meeting.

Due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, the 64rd United Nations Commission on the Status of Women in New York in March was cancelled.

Also due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 CFUW Annual General Meeting (AGM), originally scheduled to be held June 18 - 20, 2020 in Ottawa will be held electronically.

There are six proposed resolutions for consideration at the 2020 CFUW AGM:

- 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

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Doray and Patricia DuVal
Vice Presidents/CFUW Liaison

VP/MEMBERSHIP

MLUWC is experiencing a highly unusual year. In spite of the challenges that we are facing, our members are doing their best to keep our interest groups functioning via virtual get togethers. Also, our Executive has been able to meet via Zoom, thus allowing for business as usual. This is a testimony of the dedication of all of our members and explains the ongoing success of our club.

Our Membership numbers for 2019 - 2020 are very healthy. We have 196 members. This number includes:

6 Life Members
3 students
27 New Members

Owing to our strong membership numbers, the Executive was voted to maintain our membership fees for the coming year at \$120.

Thank you to every one of you for your dedicated support of MLUWC

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Armbruster
V.P. Membership

COMMUNICATIONS and PUBLICITY

The club gained community awareness in 2019-2020 partly due to community calendars, local papers, west island blog, local radio stations and community outreach. The MLUWC made the Senior Times resources directory.

Press releases were made for three “notable women” of our club awarded by the Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) at their 100th anniversary in Winnipeg. Our three members were: Françoise Perreault, Elizabeth Semmelhaack and Renate Sutherland

Correspondences with journalists were made to promote the fall fundraiser “MLUWC Goes Italian!”, dinner with Singing Chef Tenor-Davide Bazzali and invited them to attend the event.

The executives agreed and voted on a French name for the club: *Association des femmes diplômées des universités du Québec-ouest de l'île*. The French translation was used for publicity in French newspapers, French universities, billboard postings and forms for provincial funding.

A promotional club card, created by one of our executives, was translated in French.

In collaboration with the Scholarship committee, bursary application forms were translated to allow scholarship applicants to complete the forms in French.

Publicity for the annual spring fundraiser was initiated in early March but were interrupted mid-march due to the COVID-19 pandemic. My last communications were to inform local newsletters of the cancellation of "Games Day" Spring fundraiser scheduled for Friday May 1, 2020.

During the 2019-2020 year, 11 sympathy cards, 10 get-well cards and 1 thank-you card were sent to members and their families. Cards were mailed to the West island, Montreal, Quebec, Ottawa and as far as California.

At this time of uncertainty, keep a spirit of solidarity and a sense of camaraderie amongst you. Follow the rainbow movement, stay healthy and safe. When you look at the acronym MLUWC think of love!

I thank you for your trust in me during my two-year mandate as communications & publicity chair.

Respectfully submitted,
Sylvie Ghanimé
Communications & Publicity Chair

TREASURER

MONTREAL LAKESHORE UNIVERSITY WOMENS CLUB
Annual Report 2019-2020

	Budget Jun 1, 2020-May 31, 2021	Projected Actual Jun 1, 2019-May 31, 2020
REVENUE		
MLUWC Dues	22,800	22,835
Advertising	400	400
EVENTS		
Fall Kick-Off - Revenue	5,000	3,075
Fall Kick-Off - Expenses	<u>-5,000</u> 0	<u>-2,867</u> 208
MLUWC AGM Revenue	5,000	0
MLUWC AGM Expenses	<u>-5,000</u> 0	<u>0</u> 0
TOTAL REVENUE	<u>23,200</u>	<u>23,443</u>
EXPENSE		
CFUW Membership Dues	14,440	15,132
Provincial Council of Women	380	392
Montreal Council of Women Dues	50	50
Total Memberships	<u>14,870</u>	<u>15,574</u>
Communications - Website	300	50
Communications - Publicity	100	92
Total Communications	<u>400</u>	<u>142</u>
Membership	400	306
Newsletter	100	0
Program	600	419
Rent	2,000	1,504
Hospitality - Other	200	151
Office, Bank, Postage	350	454
PayPal Fees	275	184
Insurance	300	265
Total Administration	<u>4,225</u>	<u>3,284</u>

Advocacy	200	0
CFUW Convention	100	3,756
MLUWC Scholarship Fund	2,000	2,000
Donations - Other	400	500
TOTAL EXPENSE	<u>22,195</u>	<u>25,256</u>
NET INCOME	<u>1,005</u>	<u>-1,813</u>

I anticipate that the bank balance at 2020.05.31 will be \$10,000.00

After getting off to our usual start last fall through to January our activities have gradually been shut down due to the pandemic. As a result, our expenses were reduced and it has been difficult to project for the coming year's activities. As of right now, the assumption is that we will resume at close to our normal activity levels in the fall.

MLUWC income is based on the number of members and our projection is slightly lower than the current year (190 vs 194). After dropping for a period our membership has begun to rise over the last few years. AGM and Convivium incomes are based on the numbers of attendees and the cost is covered by the attendance – we price the tickets so that we breakeven, these events are not fundraisers. Total revenue projected is \$23,200.

Expenses: CFUW dues will remain at \$76.00 per member. The CFUW AGM which was to be held in Ottawa this June was cancelled, we expect that it will be held electronically at virtually no expense to us.

Respectfully submitted,
Helen Findlay
Nicole Larocque
Co-Treasurers

REPORTS FROM THE STANDING COMMITTEES

ARCHIVES

This year was a busy one for the Archives. I took advantage of having an intern from the Information and Library Technologies program at John Abbott College to scan and organize our papers. Our intern, Ann Marie Fitzgerald, gave us 105 hours of her time and I worked alongside her. We were also very grateful to the financial services company, Danmar, who gave us free office space during this time.

Our 60+ years of archives are stored in the basement of the West Island Community Centre, which has their offices in the former Valois train station. The conditions are not ideal for paper and a lot of the original scrapbooks are very fragile. It is quite difficult to work on the premises because the basement ceilings are very low in places and standing up to one's full height is impossible. It is also very dusty.

We were able to scan three of the scrapbooks and upload them to the Club's Google Drive, in addition to scanning key Club documents. We now have about 10 years worth of minutes and resolutions as well as documents of historical value (e.g. the original Club Constitution) on Google Drive. During my tenure, I have often had to pop over to the station and go through documents in order to find answers to questions asked by the Executive and members. Now, a quick read of the documents we have on file should be able to answer most questions. We still have more work to do, but hopefully we will be able to get interns each year to scan the old scrapbooks until such time as they are all in a digital format.

This completes my four years as Archivist. It has been a pleasure to move this project along. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Linda Sestock for her support and Nancy Acemian for teaching me to use Google Drive.

Respectfully submitted,
Jane Cowell-Poitras

FUNDRAISING

The annual Fall Fundraiser, "MLUWC Goes Italian" was held October 23, 2019 at the Karnak Shrine Centre in Dollard des Ormeaux. The dinner sold out with 124 tickets purchased, of which 44 % were club members and 56% represented the general public.

Due to this event, we earned \$4460.17 which met our fundraising objective: 63% of earnings represented ads in the program book and 30% came from gift basket sales. PayPal, an on-line ticket purchasing system was used again this year and has proven to be very effective. 40% of sales were made using this service.

A new fundraising initiative was in partnership with IGA Dorval. Marché Topetta donated 100 fresh produce recycling bags which we sold to members and earned the club \$500.00 towards the Scholarship Fund.

General Meeting gift baskets and restaurant certificates sales earned \$404. This amount is lower than last year given the suspension of the remaining monthly General Meetings due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Games Day spring fundraiser scheduled to take place May 1 at the Herb Linder Annex in Beaconsfield was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic as well. 31 tickets were sold and monies for 20 of these tickets were donated to the Scholarship Fund for a total of \$297.60. 11 tickets were refunded.

The MLUWC Networking Meet and Greet Group hosted four evenings and on occasion had guest speakers addressing different topics of interest. Proceeds totaled \$918.81 and were donated to the Scholarship Fund.

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 generated for the scholarship and bursary program amidst an ever-challenging market. Given our 62-year history, I believe our club is adapting very well to these changing demands and will enjoy continued success in the future.

This year the Fundraising Committee raised a total of \$6580.58 for the Scholarship Fund. This does not include personal donations made by club members unrelated to our specific fundraising activities.

As the year comes to a close, I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank our Fundraising Committee: Anne Brohan, Margaret Czalbowska, Sally Gurekian, Jane Edwards, Franca Ferrara, Carole Newberry, and Mary Vlahos. Given their invaluable support and dedication, we were able to fulfill our club's scholarship mandate.

Respectfully submitted,
Victoria Pinnell
Chair Fundraising

HOSPITALITY

The Kick-Off was held at the Beaconsfield Golf Club on Wednesday September 11, 2019. Tickets were \$25 and included a selection of savory and sweet appetizers with coffee or tea. Wine was available at an additional cost. One hundred and twenty-eight (122 members + 6 guests) people attended.

The Christmas Charity Concert and Raffle was held at Beaconsfield United Church on Monday December 9, 2019. The buffet table was plentiful and the goodies much appreciated by the choir, our members and guests.

Monthly meetings were held at the Karnak Shiners' Temple. Coffee, tea and cookies were offered. The last monthly meeting was Monday, March 9. After that, all meetings were cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The AGM had been planned for Wednesday May 13 at the Beaconsfield Gold Club but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was also cancelled. We are hoping to have our first meeting on Wednesday September 9, 2020 at the Golf Club as a sit-down dinner to replace the AGM.

Thank you to all who have helped the hospitality committee at these events. We are looking forward to seeing everyone in the fall. Stay well and stay safe.

Respectfully submitted
Luhan Wahbeh
Tina Tessari
Hospitality Committee

MONTREAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN (MCW/CFM)

Founded in November 1893, 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 *40 Federated members and 75 individual members from Montreal and surrounding region*. Its **membership represents 25,000 women** who work together to achieve the objectives of the Council, which are the improvement of social conditions, particularly for women and children.

MCW's monthly general meetings were **held on the first Thursday of every month at "Les Jardins du Canal", 2700 Rufus Rockhead in Montreal**. The monthly MCW meetings, were held at noon (lunch \$10.00) with an afternoon program at 1:00 p.m. of interesting and inspiring guest speakers. MLUWC Executive members often attended the monthly meetings.

MLUWC members, Chitra Chopra and Renate Sutherland, serve on the Board of Directors as Secretary and Treasurer, respectively.

THE PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS included the members' August workshop session, "Honouring Our Past, Celebrating the Present & Designing the Future at MCW" and the September "Advocacy & Lobbying" seminar given by Maria Peluso, MCW VP Government Affairs, which was described as a condensed version of "everything you wanted to know about lobbying and advocacy". In October, a 4-party all-female "All Candidates Panel- 2019 Federal Election", moderated by Christina Paylan, President, John Molson Women in Business, provided MCW members with an opportunity to become informed, ask questions and listen to where candidates stood on policies. Miranda Potts, a Special Care Counsellor and Senior Convener for MCW, and Makinson St. Martin, a licensed pharmacist presented the November seminar on "Senior Outreach and Medication Safety". Fifty-three MCW members and their guests enjoyed a December "Special Holiday Luncheon" and commemorated the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against Women by Honouring the 30th Anniversary of the 1989 École Polytechnique de Montréal massacre. "Black History Month" was celebrated in February when Dorothy Alexandre, President of the Conseil des Montréalais, a consultative body that presents its recommendation to the City Council of Montreal on matters of gender equality and the status of women. At the March meeting, the resolutions from the National Council of Women in Canada (NCWC) were discussed and approved, followed by Linda Hamouche's presentation of the McGill University's "DOvEE Project- **D**iagnostics **O**varian & **E**ndometrial Cancers **E**arly".

Because of the outbreak of the Corona Virus pandemic, the April meeting was cancelled and the Annual General Meeting on May 21 will be a Zoom virtual meeting. Moreover, *“The Women of the Year Luncheon” (WOTY)*, originally scheduled for April 26, honouring SHEILA GOLDBLOOM with a LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD for being an outstanding advocate for women rights, had to be postponed of COVID-19.

The Annual General Meeting & Conference of the National Council of Women of Canada has been postponed to October 15 -18, 2020 in Ottawa.

Respectfully submitted,
Renate Sutherland
MCW Representative

NEWSLETTER

Seven newsletters were published between September 2019 and March 2020. 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.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all Club activities were suspended and therefore the monthly newsletter did not publish after the March issue.

Four members placed business card advertisements in the newsletter this year. This netted the Club \$400.

Thanks to my proofreaders: Jane Edwards, Heather Trump 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

The Pot Luck event on January 13 was a great success! We had 10 venues hosted by 10 generous hostesses and assistants. There were 88 signups for the event. There were 4 dinners, 2 lunches, 2 five-to-sevens, one high tea, and one six- to-eight gala cocktail dînatoire (formal dress suggested but not obligatory).

The main idea was to provide some tasty dishes and enjoy pleasant company for a few hours on a cold winter's day/evening. This event has been a MLUWC favourite for many years. We hope the trend continues!

Many thanks to all the hostesses and assistants without whom we could not hold this very enjoyable event.

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

PROGRAM

The Program committee met in May 2019 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. We were fortunate that 90% of our first choice of speakers were available for our meetings. The Program booklet was published in August 2019 on pink card stock and handed out at the Fall “Kick Off”.

Venues for the meetings were:

- Beaconsfield Golf Club – September Kick-Off and Annual General Meeting.
- Karnak Shriners Temple – regular monthly meetings.
- Beaconsfield United Church – Christmas Raffle and Choir.

Monthly meetings:

September 11, 2019 – The Fall Kick-Off was held at the Beaconsfield Golf Club. There was a good turnout of members and guests dining to an evening of tapas, meet and greet and sign up for the various interest groups and activities.

October 7, 2019 – As a Federal Election was scheduled for later in the month, this meeting was dedicated to a *Meet-The-Candidates* evening. Advance registration for Club members was required to reserve seating as the event was also open to the public.

The main steps of the evening were as follows:

- A 15-minute MLUWC Business Meeting
- The *Meet-The-Candidates* portion of the program was kicked off at 7:15pm by Jane Cowell-Poitras who explained the procedures.
- Each candidate was allowed a six-minute opening statement with no interruptions. The order of the speakers was determined by the club president, Linda Sestock, pulling out the names of the candidates from an envelope. The order in which the names were pulled out was the order in which each candidate spoke.
- Sixty-minute Q&A which was moderated by Rhonda Massad and Daniel Khoury. Questions could be addressed to a specific candidate or up to three candidates. Each candidate had a maximum of 2 minutes to answer. Nancy Acemian was the time keeper and informed the speakers when they had 30 seconds left to speak

Representing their federal parties and seated in alphabetical order:

- Gary Charles, People’s Party of Canada, Lac St. Louis Riding
- Dana Chevalier, NDP, Lac St. Louis Riding
- Mariam Ishak, Conservative, Pierrefonds-Dollard Riding

- Francis Scarpaleggia, Liberal, Lac St. Louis incumbent
- Cameron Stiff, Green Party, Vaudreuil-Soulanges

This *Meet-the-Candidates* program was live-streamed on the West Island Blog Community News and was be viewable on our Club’s Facebook page and on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/Sy-vj4RzX4Y> .
The event was a success!

November 11, 2019 – Maria De Wolfe introduced 2 of our Scholarship recipients. The third recipient was unable to attend due to illness. After the presentation of the recipients and their speeches, Maria Korab-Laskowska, a club member, gave an audio-video presentation entitled “A Photographic Journey: Fragrant Spruce and the Voice of First Nations”. It was a hiking and canoeing journey through the unspoiled paradises of the Adirondacks and several Quebec parks (including La Mauricie, Gaspésie, Bonaventure Island, Mingan Islands) complete with poetry and music.

December 9, 2019 – The Christmas Charity Raffle and Carols was held at the Beaconsfield United Church and the Philomela Choir sang beautiful Christmas music. Combined with sweets and savories brought in by members and volunteers, we had a wonderful evening full of Christmas cheer. The Raffle Baskets donated by the Interest Groups raised \$1,750 for the West Island Community Shares and \$1,000 in gift cards was raised for CARE Jeunesse (helping youth aging out of foster care).

February 10, 2020 – Dr. Jeremy Clark, Assistant Professor, Concordia Institute for Information Systems Engineering who specializes in Bitcoin, Blockchain, FinTech, Cryptography, Data security and Voting System Security gave a presentation on the *What, Why and How of Bitcoins*. Due to technical issues with the projector at Karnak, instead of sharing a PowerPoint presentation with us, Dr. Clark made it more of a Q&A format which was very well received by the members.

March 9, 2020 – a very informative meeting as four dedicated members talked about their career choices and paths: Claire Segal, Barbara Lewis, Anne Fotheringham, and Luhan Wahbeh.

April 6, 2020 – Was to be a presentation by Dr. Paul Clark, Executive Director of Actions Réfugiés Montréal, about the effects of Bill 21 on immigration and the integration of migrants. It was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

May 13, 2020 – The Annual Meeting and Dinner was originally to be at the Beaconsfield Golf Club with guest speak Eda Holmes, Artistic and Executive Director, Centaur Theatre. Again, due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, it was modified. At the time of this report, a digital format for the AGM is being organized without a guest speaker. Voting using Google forms and Zoom for video conferencing are being considered for the AGM.

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

In the fall, the committee met to review the process for scholarship and bursary applications, review the application forms and discuss recommendations to be made to the Executive. The process for awarding university scholarships and bursaries remained unchanged. The application form was revised to be a more accessible PDF and the French translation of the application was improved. Thank you to Nancy Acemian for her technical support and for the translation of the PDC form into French. Thank you also to Sylvie Ghanimé for her review and help with the translations.

During our discussions it was clear that the committee felt strongly that due to the healthy state of our scholarship fund (due to members' contribution and our highly effective fundraising committee) the club was in a position to help more women in their educational pursuits, especially at the university level. A resolution was adopted to request an additional university bursary of \$2000 to be awarded either to a John Abbot student or a university student. The choice of the recipient would be made by the committee. The resolution was brought to the Scholarship Fund Committee, (approved), the Executive Committee (approved) and finally the general membership (approved).

As I write this in mid-April, a lot has changed significantly. The adult education centers (Jeanne Sauvé and Place Cartier) and John Abbot College are closed. On April 13 we received an email from John Abbot College cancelling the awards ceremony. However, the college is working on a process for choosing scholarship and bursary recipients. We know that the needs will be great as summer jobs will be almost impossible this year, and as of yet there has been no program announced to help students who cannot work this summer, or, who depend on part-time jobs during the year.

The committee will have to also review our traditional method of collecting university scholarship applications and reviewing them. The selection process was based on a collaborative approach where all committee members had an opportunity to review the applications individually and then met as committee to choose the candidates for interview. A subcommittee would meet and interview the candidates and then make the final selection. In the current state, this process was halted near the end of March. We have, also, in recent years discussed how we can safely receive applications forms by email. As the applicants share personal and financial information the traditional method of mailing in the application was deemed safer. We will continue to pursue other options.

As things stand now, we hope to be able to come to consensus on the recipients of the Margaret Manson and Alberta Shearer scholarships by early May and to award the Amy Williams scholarship and the bursary for a student in a technical program at JAC probably by the end of May. Rather than a traditional in-person meeting we will try other methods of connecting with our committee members. If the adult education centers reopen later this spring, we may be able to award the bursaries for adult learners.

I would like to thank committee members: Joyce Schaaf, Theresa Sliz, Judy Kelley, Cendra Paas, Kathleen McGrath, Luhan Wahbeh, Marie-Hélène Gauthier, Nancy Acemian and Pauline van Nieuwburg for their support and work for the MLUWC scholarship and bursary program.

I would like to thank all members who donate to the fund and to the hardworking Fundraising Committee. You are the ones who make it possible for the MLUWC to help women pursue their educational goals. I would like to thank Heather Hamilton, chair of the Scholarship Fund Committee,

and the Executive Committee for their unfailing support for the scholarship and bursary program. I would also like to thank Sylvie Ghanimé and Linda Sestock for their work in publicizing the program.

After three years as chair of the committee I will be co-chairing the committee for the next year and then stepping back as chairperson. It has been an absolute honor to work with so many women dedicated to education.

Respectfully submitted,
Maria De Wolfe
Chairperson, MLUWC Scholarship Committee

SCHOLARSHIP FUND COMMITTEE

Although the COVID-19 crisis has had an impact on the Scholarship Fund and certain fundraising activities this year, I would like to reassure everyone that we are in good shape and ready to move forward as soon as the situation permits.

In October, the Fund Committee presented a motion to the Club Executive that \$2,000 per year be made available to award an additional bursary for a university applicant. This award would be at the discretion of the Scholarship Committee and would go to an applicant whose academic achievement may not be high enough to compete for our main scholarships but whose personal situation shows them to be no less deserving of an award. The motion was approved by the Executive and presented to the membership for ratification at the November General Meeting. This brings the total amount of scholarships and bursaries awarded annually to \$10,800.

Although our Scholarship Fund balance has suffered a hit as a result of the financial downturn associated with the COVID-19 crisis, we are fortunate to have a healthy cash balance at the bank and are in great shape to make our 2020 scholarship and bursary payments. The selection process for the 2020 awards is currently on hold, but we are ready to make payments when the time comes. On March 31, the Investment Fund was valued at approximately \$152,000, down about 15% from a high point reached in January 2020. The good news is the market is starting to trend back up in and we have already recovered some of that loss. The market value of the account on April 15 was \$159,000.

In addition to revenues from the MLUWC Goes Italian fundraiser, the Scholarship Fund received over \$5,000 in individual donations this year. Many members who purchased tickets for the Games Day event which had to be cancelled have generously offered to consider the amount paid as a donation to the Fund. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the Scholarship Fund this year, whether by direct donation, tickets to fundraising or networking events, raffle and other activities at our general meetings. The fiscal year end for the Fund is May 31 and as usual, a full financial report will be published in the September newsletter.

None of this would be possible without the diligent work of the members of the Scholarship Fund Committee. This year we welcomed Rachel Chenier as Treasurer. Louise Dagenais, Victoria Pinnell, Maria De Wolfe make up the rest of the team. I am grateful for the continued support of these fine women.

Respectfully submitted,
Heather Hamilton
Chair, Scholarship Fund Committee

WEBSITE

The Website is a resource that increases the visibility of the Club's activities and facilitates events which range from the monthly talks, the various fundraising activities to the networking group. In general, there are approximately 1000 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, most of the activities of the Club were by necessity cancelled as of the middle of March 2020 which led to a decrease in the site viewing activity after that date.

Respectfully submitted,
Sabra Ledent, Marianna Newkirk, webmasters

REPORTS FROM INTEREST GROUPS

At the MLUWC Kickoff in September, 27 Interest Groups were confirmed for the year. During this 2019-2020 season, we inaugurated 4 new Interest Groups: Breakfast Club, Evening Discussion Book Club II, Wine and Cheese Group, and Exploring World Cultures Dinner Group.

At our Annual Christmas Meeting, with the help of her two dedicated reindeers, Suzanne Chaussée and Theresa Sliz and I sold raffle tickets in the amount of \$1542. The money was donated to our charity of the year: West Island Community Shares. Congratulations to all our Interest Groups for donating such a wide range of enticing and beautiful Christmas baskets for the charity.

Unfortunately, due to the Coronavirus pandemic, all in-person Interest Groups activities were cancelled during the month of March and will remain suspended until further notice. However, a few Interest Groups are meeting virtually during the last two months of the season.

Hopefully we will all be able to gather again within our respective Interest Groups by the autumn of this year.

Franca Ferrara
Interest Group Chair

ADVOCACY GROUP

This year the group again focused mainly on youth homelessness and prevention of violence against women. We are also working on establishing working relationships with other local women's organizations to cooperate on our common objectives.

C.A.R.E. jeunesse works with youth ageing out of foster care. We donated \$1,750 in gift cards at Christmas. We collected 40 suitcases, and the father of a scholarship winner donated \$100 to buy suitcases and backpacks for youth leaving care. John Gray Moving in Lachine has a storage container for them.

The Petition written two years ago regarding support beyond the current age of 18 is still on Change.org. Jennifer Ferguson works in Greg Kelly's office has put the petition on the CAQ's government website.

We are also raising awareness of the needs of AJOI, an organization working to provide shelter for homeless youth on the West Island and raised \$436 to buy a brick for their Ricochet youth shelter project.

In support of the UN Orange the World campaign in October, letters were again sent to all local municipalities asking them to light up their city hall or to mention the campaign on their community bulletin boards. We also passed out orange ribbons at the October general meeting.

Women Aware held a networking event at Concordia on November 25. Three Advocacy members participated. It was interesting for meeting the other groups such as Zonta, MCW, etc. and it is important for us to have a presence at these events.

For the Polytechnique commemoration vigil on Dec. 6, several members attended the memorial service at St. Columba by the Lake in Pointe Claire.

For International Women's Day, club members attended the West Island Women's Centre brunch and the Zonta lunch.

Indigenous Awareness. Based on the Reconciliation Report, many groups now begin their meetings with an acknowledgement statement. The group has recommended that MLUWC adopt this policy which it has.

Several members attended the Advocacy workshop held by the South Shore UWC in February.

Awareness: Linda Sestock now posts all of our club's advocacy activities on social media.

CFUW Advocacy prepared questions on several topics for candidates in the fall federal election. The Advocacy group used the ones on Homelessness and Indigenous Women at the MLUWC All Candidates Meeting.

Nancy Doray and Patricia DuVal

BREAKFAST CLUB

During the 2019- 2020 season, the MLUWC launched a new Interest Group spearheaded by Franca Ferrara. The Breakfast Club was inaugurated at the Kickoff with 28 registered members and contributed to the annual MLUWC Christmas gift basket.

The group meet on the first Thursday of the month. Their first breakfast meeting was on October 1, 2019 at 9:00 am and they met at Ben and Florentine Restaurant in Kirkland. In November they broke bread at Le Dejeuner in Pierrefonds and an early Christmas Breakfast was celebrated in December at L'Oeufrier in Dollard des Ormeaux. There was no Breakfast Club meeting scheduled for the month of January 2020. Activities resumed in February and a Breakfast gathering was planned at Kitchen 73 but it was unfortunately cancelled due to a snowstorm. In March we met for what now appears to be our final breakfast gathering for this season at Allô Mon Coco in Kirkland. Hopefully the Breakfast Club will be able to resume its monthly gathering by the autumn of 2020.

Franca Ferrara

BON APPETIT DINNER CLUB

This dynamic and well-supported interest group of forty MLUWC members had a shortened season of dining out, given the recent COVID-19 pandemic guidelines which suspended all such group gatherings. Only four restaurants out of a possible nine were visited.

On the fourth Thursday of every month, with the exception of December, different restaurants in and around the West Island of Montreal were agreed upon in September and visited over the course of the year.

Participation ranged anywhere from 12-20 ladies an outing. As an alternative to all evening meals, two luncheons were planned, one in January which unfortunately was cancelled due to poor weather and the others due to the pandemic restrictions.

A \$5.00 contribution was collected from each participant upon registration at the Kick-off in September and the proceeds were put towards our club's two Christmas raffle gift baskets. This year, two restaurant gift certificates became a part of our lovely gift baskets.

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

I wish to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to all of the "Bon Appétit" clan who did an exceptional job of organizing our monthly dinners.

Victoria Pinnell

BOOK DISCUSSION I

As we remain "sheltered" at home, my appreciation for a good story has skyrocketed. I am missing the book club discussions, but when we next meet, we will certainly enjoy the company, and our spirited views.

Our membership stands at 14, with an average between 8-12 at each meeting. We have co- chairs, Judy Kelley and Marg Nicoll- Griffith.

The books we have discussed this year have included "Seeker" by Rita Pomade, followed by an in-house visit by the author at the Beaconsfield Library. In October, around Election Day, we discussed "The Promise of Canada, " by Charlotte Gray, and "Lester B. Pearson" by Andrew Cohen. "The Lost Girls of Paris" by Pam Jenkoff in November, prompted stories of war time memories. In December we, discussed Michelle Obama's wonderful uplifting book, "Becoming".

2020 began with "Indian Horse" by Richard Wagamese. A sober discussion, and shared opinion that with more understanding of the residential school fall-out, we, as a society, must do better to be less judgmental. Our February book was "Brother" by David Chariandy, a story of first-generation Trinidadian teen-aged boys growing up in present-day Toronto. Our March book, "The Home for Unwanted Girls" by Joanne Goodman, was a story of the Duplessis orphans, again disturbing tales of children growing up in very difficult, if different, times. Three books of misguided government policies and adults treating children badly! We needed more cheerful reading.

We were all looking forward to the review of "Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine" by Gail Honeyman, and "Adventures of a Young Naturalist: The Zoo Quest Expedition" by David Attenborough, but with the current situation we are limited in our discussions - some email thoughts, but not enough to do either book justice. They will each have their day!

We want to thank all our members for their enthusiasm and friendship - this pandemic has us all rethinking priorities, and reaching out. We are all suggesting new books to read, and will have new authors and stories to share, when the time is right. Hopefully soon!

Judy Kelley and Marg Nicoll-Griffith

BOOK DISCUSSION II

The books we read this year covered a wide spectrum of topics: *Educated* (Tara Westover's escape from a survivalist Mormon family and her determination to get a formal education); *The Girl of Hummingbird Lane* (the story about two women separated by circumstance, culture and distance); *Killers of the Flower Moon* (a shocking episode of US history as recounted in this story of how Native Americans were murdered for their wealth); *Claws of the Panda* (Beijing's campaign of influence and intimidation); *Washington Black* (at the heart of the novel is the tormented friendship of a black 12-year-old slave and the first white man to treat him decently); *A Gentleman in Moscow* (a clever, upbeat look at Russian history through the eyes of one man who is sentenced to spend the rest of his life under house arrest, in Moscow's swanky Metropole Hotel).

Due to the current COVID-19 outbreak, the March, April and May meetings had to be cancelled. As a group we have decided that we would review the three remaining books (*Where the Crawdads Sing*; *Becoming*; *I Always Loved You*) when we would be - hopefully - meeting in September, October and November, respectively.

Although we were not all in agreement as to the merits of these books, we always had very interesting and lively discussions. Thanks to the reviewers and hostesses, we enjoyed a very stimulating, albeit short literary season.

We are currently 12 members.

Hélène Quaid

BRIDGE – DUPLICATE

Duplicate bridge is played by a group of ladies who want to improve their bridge skills using Standard American bidding. We meet on the 2nd and 4th Thursday mornings of the month from September to April at Centennial Hall in Beaconsfield. We want to thank the city of Beaconsfield for allowing us to use their facility.

Jane Quail and Ginger Brossard

EVENING BOOK DISCUSSION I

We had 12 active members in the group, getting together once a month in our homes. Exceptionally, for the March meeting, and presumably for the April and May meetings, we are taking advantage of technology, to meet and discuss our reading selections on line.

Our list of books for the year were:

- *Becoming* by Michelle Obama
- *Chilbury Ladies Choir* by Jennifer Ryan
- *The Unlikely Adventures of the Shergill Sisters* by Balli Kaur Jaswal
- *Pachinko* by Min Jin Lee
- *Educated* by Tara Westover
- *Where the Crawdads Sing* by Delia Owens

- *A Gentleman in Moscow* by Amor Towles
- *The Farm* by Joanne Ramos

Linda Ricketts

EVENING BOOK DISCUSSION II

This new book club started in the fall of 2019 and meets on the third Tuesday of every month at Chapter's on St-John's.

Activity for 2019-2020:

- November 2019: met to discuss the group (timing, books).
- December 2019: skipped, holiday time.
- January 2020: met to discuss "The Tattooist of Auschwitz"
- February 2020: met to discuss "Educated".
- March 2020: "Where the Crawdads Sing"

The other meetings were cancelled due to the COVID-19 restrictions.

The other books we were scheduled to read this year were: "Home for Unwanted Girls" in April, and "Talking to Strangers" in May.

For the upcoming year, these are books that most of us have agreed on: "Life without Water", "White Chrysanthemums", "Bear Town", "Washington Black", "Dare To Lead", and "Nine Perfect Strangers".

We are currently 10 members.

Amy Dhindsa

EXPLORING WORLD CULTURES

Thanks to the recommendation of member Veronica Desaulniers, this new group was formed and was greeted with great enthusiasm by many of our members, especially our new members. Every month a member of the group organizes the dinner. At our first outing in November, we visited Aryana, a restaurant that specializes in the cuisine of Afghanistan. In December, we went to Canal, an Egyptian seafood restaurant. We did not know it at the time, but our last outing was to Katoreya Sushiman where we celebrated the cuisine of Japan. We are looking forward to starting back in the Fall.

Linda Sestock

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.

Janet Anderson

GOURMET II

This Interest Group has 10 members. Normally we would be meeting each month from October to May, however due to the current COVID-19 crisis, we will have only met five times.

On three occasions we enjoyed delicious dinners hosted by one of our members in her home, assisted by three others, who planned and cooked.

The menus are always inspiring and we enjoy tasting the wines that have been chosen to accompany the dishes. We enjoyed meals at restaurants on two occasions.

In December, our husbands joined us at LaSalle College Restaurant "La Classe" which proved to be a highlight and in February a smaller than usual group enjoyed a good meal at the Restaurant Bellissimo in Dorval.

All of which were most enjoyable and we look forward to more culinary exploration next "season".

Margaret Vost

GOURMET III

We have eight members in our group and three spares. We normally meet nine times and go to a restaurant in June. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, we only met six times this year. Our February meeting was cancelled due to bad weather but we did meet in March. Unfortunately, the other dinners have been cancelled.

Gilda Martinello

GOURMET IV

We have nine members in our group and we cook in groups of three, with dinners normally from October to June. Spouses join us in December and June. It has been an abbreviated year with only three get-togethers. Our main courses included Duck Confit with Ginger Sweet Potatoes and Zoodles, Beef Tenderloin with a Brandy Pepper Sauce, and Lamb Shanks with Orange Gremolata.

We welcomed our Christmas raffle prize winner, Joan Dyer, to our February luncheon.

Hopefully next year will bring us to the table more often, to enjoy each other's company and the wonderful food that is prepared for our enjoyment.

Valerie Fortin

JAUNTERS

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

October 2 Jaunt – Susan Merritt

Twelve of our members toured the Maude Abbott Medical Museum at Strathcona Hall, McGill campus with Dr. Robert Fraser, Director of the Museum, who entertained us with interesting stories and explanations of some of the medical specimens and equipment. Lunch followed on the West Island at Romano's in the Pointe Claire village.

October 29 Jaunt – Linda Ricketts

Thirteen members enjoyed a guided visit at the MMFA's "Egyptian Mummies" Exhibit, on loan from the British Museum. An interesting aspect was the use of CT Scan technology in understanding the process of mummification. Lunch followed at l'Academie on Crescent Street.

November 22 Jaunt – Joyce Schaaf, Judy Couillard, Joanne Fraser, Suzanne Taylor

Twenty-two members were warmly received by staff during their visit to the Canadian Centre for Architecture to see the exhibit "Building a New World: Americanism in Russian Architecture". Lunch followed in Dorval.

January Jaunt – Diane Nener, Pat Jones

Sixteen Jaunters had a guided visit of the Cannabis plant Aurora in Pointe Claire. It is a state-of-the-art facility, growing and processing 40,000 Kg. of medical and recreational cannabis annually. Following the tour, brunch was enjoyed at Le Dejeuner Cosmopolitan in Pointe Claire.

March, April, and May Jaunts have been postponed to next season as a result of the pandemic.

Chitra Chopra and Linda Ricketts

KNIT & CHAT

We have been meeting at each other's homes every last Saturday of the month from 1:30 to approximately 4:30 p.m. We enjoyed the knit and also the chat. This has given us the opportunity to share our stories and we have become not only a group of knitters but also a group of friends. We end our session with some delicious and yummy cake or cookies with either coffee or tea. Our last meeting was on January 25, 2020. The rest of the season was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

We all participated in knitting squares which we joined to make a blanket and it will be donated to a women's shelter in the fall.

Tina Tessari

MUSIC APPRECIATION

The Music Appreciation Group once again enjoyed the Montreal Symphony Orchestra's morning concerts. There were 21 members this year, with very good attendance at meetings, concerts and lunch. Our final two concerts of the series of six sadly were cancelled due to the virus. The MSO has

asked that we save our unused tickets for a credit when they resume performing. The four concerts we did attend were quite good, two of which Nagano directed. We will miss him!

Special thanks to everyone for their time, contributions and enthusiasm. Janet Anderson reserved an array of delicious restaurants. Our drivers - Brenda Wisenthal, Barbara Sauve, Susan Cruickshank, Dianne Robinson and Nicole Larocque - safely drove through all kinds of weather and traffic. Inquisitive members researched the composers and music to share with the group. Dianne and Susan helped with computer sound and technicalities. And four members hosted and baked.

We had planned a potluck lunch at Janet Guay's in May. Later in May, Carolina Soulié had arranged a group meeting with two violinists from the MSO. Unfortunately, these two events are cancelled.

Maria Cranker

MUSIC HISTORY

Until we were rudely interrupted by the Coronavirus pandemic and its related restrictions on social gathering, the Music History group was very much enjoying viewing together the highly entertaining 6-episode BBC series "The Story of Music" by Howard Goodall. A YouTube link to the final episode was sent to the group to round out the series and finish the session. This may be the way forward for the group if restrictions on social gathering remain in effect when activities would normally resume in September.

Joan Dyer

MYSTERY BOOK CLUB

This year's meetings were shortened due to the COVID-19 social distancing measures enacted by the government. These are the mysteries we read and reviewed this past year:

- Witch Elm by Tara French
- The Dry by Jane Harper
- Entry Island by Peter May
- The Silent Patient by Alex Michaelides
- A Gentleman's Murder by Christopher Huang
- A Noise Downstairs by Linwood Barclay

Our March book was *The Midnight Line* by Lee Child but unfortunately, we could not meet face to face to discuss it. We did, however, exchange emails about this book.

We had a video-conference call to discuss *The Woman in the Window* at the end of April and we will have another in May to discuss *Rupture* by Ragnar Jonasson. We also plan to meet during the summer to discuss mystery books or TV series that we are reading or watching.

Our meetings are scheduled for the second Wednesday of every month and we meet at various members' homes and although we don't always agree on the books, we have had some very good discussions. We currently have 11 members.

Gilda Martinello

NETWORKING

My hope was to host six networking events this year, but I am very pleased that we were able to meet four times. Every event was a success and it was a pleasure to see familiar faces and to meet new people. Thank you to the speakers, volunteers, participants and Studio 77 for making our networking nights such a success.

We have gone from an attendance of 15-20 people to 20-30 participants and several new members have joined our Club after attending a networking event. This year we increased our fundraising total to \$918.81 for the Scholarship Fund.

Due to COVID-19, we had to cancel our April networking event but it may be replaced with a Zoom 5 à 7.

Linda Sestock

NEW BOOK EXCHANGE

Our first and only meeting is in September where we meet to discuss possible book selections. We then each buy a book, read it in October and then pass it on in November. We skip December and then pass the book on at the first of the month until we receive our own back.

Here are some book titles that we have read or will be reading this past year:

- The Chelsea Girls
- A Better Man
- The Innocents
- Dual Citizens
- A Delhi Obsession
- The Dutch House
- Akin
- The Stationary Shop

Do join us in September.

B.J. Bell

PHOTOGRAPHY

We are currently 13 members. Photography meetings were organised in members' homes. We met on the second Tuesday of the month in the afternoon. We talked about our pictures and photography in general. We discussed assignments, and members made a few presentations. Our season has been cut short due to Coronavirus, so all planned outings were canceled.

Maria Korab-Laskowska

TRAVEL

Meetings are held once a month. This year we met in October, November, December, January and February at the Vivalis retirement home. This year's March and April meetings have been canceled due to coronavirus.

Here is this season's program:

- October 15: "Spirit of Istanbul" by Renata and Arun Bagga
- November 19: "Haida territory" by Dianne Robinson and "Walking Basque country" by Maria Korab-Laskowska
- December 17: "Walking Through Ancient British History" by Vic Breedon
- January 21: "Ultimate winter challenge of K2" by Jacek Olek
- February 18: "Slovenia and Croatia" by Carolina Soulié

Ann Arial and Maria Korab-Laskowska

WINE AND CHEESE

This group is new to the club this year and is using a somewhat different format from the more traditional wine tasting groups. The hostess chooses the type of meal and wines and all the participants contribute \$20 to the cost. We explored wines from different countries and overall, the experience was very good. We limited our number to 6 with 3 regular spares. Unfortunately, one of regular members had health issues and was forced to quit the group. She was replaced once she decided she could not come back this year.

We met 4 times, once in a restaurant and 3 times in our members homes. All of our get togethers were thoroughly enjoyable. We got to know two new members a little better and hope to continue doing so next year.

Paulette Cargill

WINE APPRECIATION I

We are an eclectic baker's dozen of wine enthusiasts each with many amusing anecdotes to share. Our meetings are always entertaining, always illuminating, and we always leave having learned something new – not always about wine! Laughter prevails at each meeting with the decibel level getting higher as the evening progresses.

We started off this year in a different manner: sharing a Tabla Iberica and other delights at Olé, a tapas restaurant; well recommended. The wine tour took us next to Sicily for a sampling of wines including a surprising mystery wine, "Rain cloud", and delightful pairings. The travelogue, of course, took us to Kenya, Tanzania, Greece, and Rome. And we discovered a unique wine glass carrier. Then it was off to Lebanon for a range of wines with Middle Eastern pairings and news that the SAQ carries quite a few of those wines. Next came offerings from the Rhone Valley, reds and whites paired with unusual foods, all the while the hostess had been battling a flooded basement! This was followed by tastings of Pinot noir, the red wine for white wine drinkers which evoked the highest decibel levels. And finally, in February we

visited the Andes around the table, Chile in particular, and sampled some local wines, and were entertained with an especially evocative travelogue. A wine to look up is “VIK la piu belle”, a beautifully painted bottle, specially “adapted” to prudish North America.

Then, of course, we all experienced the obligatory two-month pandemic hiatus which was followed by a virtual wine appreciation meeting dubbed a “ghostly ballet by sippers” wherein we faded in and out of each other’s screens.

We raise a glass to another good year of camaraderie as we continue to soldier on with the pandemic and all that it has laid waste in its path and which will be our companion for a while longer.

Cheers! Santé! Salute! Salud! Prost! Na zdrowie! Skål!

Chitra Chopra

WINE APPRECIATION II

We are a group of 8 regular members and 3 spare members who fill in if a regular member will be absent for a specific evening. Each pre-scheduled monthly evening from September to May (with exception of January as it is our MLUWC traditional Pot Luck Dinner month) is hosted by a member who selects the evening theme, wines and pairing foods. The hostess researches the selected wines. She also prepares the information sheets on each wine plus provides the wine tasting rating sheet for evaluation of the wines.

Our group this year explored a variety of red and white wines from countries such as France, Italy, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Portugal, Australia, Canada, United States and South Africa at various price points. We even this year experienced some “organic wines”. We discovered many less expensive wines which are perfect for casual entertaining and some more expensive wines for that special occasion. Some nights the wines presented were newly offered wines from wine importers and available at the SAQ.

Accompanying the wines were food pairings from around the world including special delights from Asia, Ireland, Poland, Hungary, Germany, Italy and France.

Although a regular season for our groups is 8 evenings with 24 wines to taste, this year due to the COVID-19 crisis, we only met for a total of 5 evenings...therefore sampling a total of 15 wonderful wines. If the self-isolation situation is lifted, we will try to pick up on these last 3 evenings throughout the summer.

In December, all members (regular & spares) were invited to our Holiday Celebration evening which included a Secret Santa gift exchange.

Overall, our Wine Appreciation evenings are well marked by laughter, storytelling, great conversation, friendship and of course the discovery of some great wines with sampling and pairing of delicious foods!

Diane Gibb