



Contents	Pages
Club News	1-7
Getting Involved	2-7
Interest Groups	5-6
Events	1-7

Happy 2025

As many of you know, my least favourite duty of being President of the Month is writing the monthly newsletter article. I never know what to say, so it fills me with dread. This month I decided to take advantage of our learnings from our November speaker and use AI. So, full disclosure, the following article was generated using the AI application Gemini with just the following prompts; newsletter article, 250 words, new year, senior ladies. I hope you enjoy the following.

Happy New Year to all our Remarkable Women!

As the calendar turns, we welcome a new year filled with promise and possibility. This is a special time to reflect on the past year's journey and embrace the fresh start before us. For us, as senior ladies, it's a chance to celebrate the rich tapestry of our lives, woven with experiences, wisdom, and enduring friendships. This year, let's prioritize what truly nourishes our souls. Perhaps it's rediscovering a long-forgotten passion, like painting, writing, or playing an instrument. Maybe it's exploring new avenues for connection, such as joining a book club, volunteering in the community, or simply spending quality time with loved ones. It could even be focusing on our physical well-being through gentle exercise, healthy eating, or mindfulness practices.

Let's also remember the importance of self-care. Taking time for ourselves – whether it's enjoying a quiet cup of tea, reading a good book, or indulging in a relaxing bath – is essential for maintaining our mental and emotional well-being.

This new year is an opportunity to create new memories, strengthen existing bonds, and continue to grow and thrive. Let's approach it with open hearts, positive attitudes, and a sense of adventure. Here's to a year filled with joy, laughter, good health, and the unwavering support of our wonderful community. Cheers to a prosperous and fulfilling New Year!

President of the Month

Maria Timmons



I would like to thank all the members who donated to this initiative. A total of \$1990 was raised this year. Maria T.

A short but warm thank you was sent from Nova Vita as follows:

I've attached the photo here for you. Thank you again for visiting us today, and please pass along our sincere thanks for the wonderful generosity displayed by your members. It is so appreciated, now and all year long!

Jessica Powless, Fundraising and Events Manager
Nova Vita Domestic Violence Prevention Services
www.novavita.org
519-752-1005 ext. 232



HOLIDAY PARTY

We were a lively group, enjoying delectable finger foods on December 11th. We had more appetizers and desserts than we could eat. Those whose last names started with letters A to L brought appetizers and those whose last names started with M to Z brought desserts. Some people identified what kind of appetizer or dessert they were bringing but most were a mystery and who doesn't love a mystery at a potluck?

Our attentive host, Lynne D., and her assistants Marla M. and Jeanne C. made the experience special. Thanks to Lynne for hosting us in her home!

It was a pleasure to chat with members and enjoy their tasty creations!! The event made for a brilliant start to the festive season !



A VERY MERRY
CHRISTMAS
and Happy New Year!



CFUW Brantford offers members lots of opportunities to get involved and contribute to the growth and functioning of our club and its initiatives.

Why not invite a friend to come to one of our general meetings to hear an interesting speaker and meet new friends?

Why not volunteer to join an ad hoc committee to look at the resolutions proposed by CFUW National and make recommendations to the executive and general membership as to which resolutions we should support at the National AGM when the call is made at the general meeting?

Why not contribute door prizes, books, or DVDs to the Trivia Night Committee to help raise funds for our Scholarship Awards?

Why not offer to help the Social Committee with their plans for the 80th Anniversary of CFUW Brantford?

Why not contribute a short article or photos of the activities of one of your Interest Groups or information about a member who should be mentioned regarding a life event, an illness or an achievement in our newsletter, website, and/or Facebook page?

Why not offer to join the Nominations Committee for 2025-2026? .



NOMINATIONS FOR OUR LEADERSHIP TEAM FOR 2025-26

Don't be shy! You can make a contribution to our club by volunteering for next year's leadership team. Minimal time and experience required.

BUT FIRST - we need a Nominations Committee to develop a roster of candidates. Please contact a member of the executive if you are able to dedicate a few hours of your time to the Nominations process in the next two months.

??? 2024 TRIVIA NIGHT ???

What is the chemical symbol for Potassium? Which countries make up the United Kingdom? It's that time of year again...time for **Trivia Night!!** We know that you've spent the last year studying and are ready to demonstrate your prowess...or maybe you're just ready for an evening of fun! Last year's event was a great success but we need YOU!!

Remember that this is the major fundraiser for our Scholarships so we really hope that ALL MEMBERS get involved - preferably on a team!!

Without this money, our program will be much reduced!!

If you can't be on a team, you are still invited to make a donation!!

- **Date/Time** - Wednesday, Feb. 12th beginning at 7:30 p.m. (arrive by 7:15) at the Dunsdon Legion. Please bring **CASH** for the bar, books, etc.
- **Prizes**- Because members have been so generous in the past, we are once again asking you to check your cupboards to see if you have any suitable prizes. We are asking for new, unused, unopened items. There is no need to purchase anything.
- **Book Sale** - We did very well with the Book Sale last year so hope to be able to do the same at our upcoming event. We would like books and DVDs in very good to excellent condition.
- **Where?**-Deliver prizes, books and DVDs to **17 Chestnut Ave.** They can be left on the front porch near the wall.

Lynn H.



Scholarship

Hello All,

I want to share this message from our spring scholarship winner, Keira Gayowsky. I hope you can read through her newsletter which has the link attached at the end of her message. What she has accomplished in her first semester is astounding, not to mention her presentation of this newsletter. Don't miss our logo on the last page.

Happy New Year.

Karen I.

Hi Karen,

I hope you're doing well. Hope you enjoyed a nice holiday season and Happy New Year! It's Keira Gayowsky, just saying hi.

Today, January 2nd, is my 18th birthday (woo, I'm an adult!), and I couldn't think of a better way to celebrate than by sharing something special with the people who have supported me along the way. To keep you updated, I've created the very first edition of Keira's Semester in Review!

This magazine is a new project I'm starting to highlight from each semester, and give you a look at how your support has helped make this exciting chapter so magical. This edition covers my Fall 2024 semester, and I hope it gives you a glimpse into everything I've been working on and learning.

I've attached the magazine as a PDF for ease (there is also a google drive link at the bottom of this email in case it does not work), but if you'd like a printed version, just let me know, as I'd be more than happy to mail one out (especially now that the Canada post strike is done)! Also, feel free to share it with whoever you'd like, especially the ladies of CFUW Brantford.

One of the super cool opportunities I'm most excited about is an academic trip to Greece this summer, which I'll be doing for a credit, and possibly some research (still figuring this one out, I talk more about it on page 27). If you'd like to learn more or support this endeavor, here's the link: account.eftours.ca/donations/qvjvXj. I'm really looking forward to sharing updates from that trip in future editions!

Please, if there's ever anything I can do to help or support you, don't hesitate to reach out. You have done so much for me, and I have love to give back, it's who I am.

Thank you again for being part of this adventure. I'm so excited to bring you along as I continue this journey.

Sincerely,

Keira Gayowsky

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1yzFpUBwszApysXRoff2glmlvEAidKCmW/view?usp=sharing>

CFUW Interest Groups to the end of 2024

Interest Groups continue to be an important part of belonging to CFUW with many members belonging to more than one group. It is a wonderful way to socialize and get to know other members of the club. Most of the groups meet in person though some have opted for Zoom meetings. During inclement weather and during the winter months, many groups meet via Zoom.

The **Biking Group** met weekly from May until October, meeting for a ride around the Grand River Loop or on various trails in and around Brantford including nearby communities. Rides are approximately 20 km, at a senior pace, with flexible dates and times.

The **Walking Group** met weekly all year round, at a variety of trails, come rain or shine, with the Gretzky indoor track a backup as needed. Members often met after the walk for coffee.

The **Golf Group** did not meet this season as there was no one to act as contact and organizer. If the group is to continue to be offered, it is necessary to have someone volunteer to be the contact and organizer. Please let me know if you are willing to undertake that role.

There are **three book groups**: The **Monday Afternoon Book Group** met monthly, in person over a late lunch at Symposium Café. This group discussed a variety of books that they read in the past month.

Monday and Thursday Evening Book Groups met on a monthly basis with members taking turns either hosting in their homes or leading the discussion. Books are chosen by each group at the end of the previous year to allow everyone plenty of time to obtain and read the current month's selection. Books vary by genre and always spark interesting and dynamic discussions, often veering off the actual book topic. A great time is had by all.

Bridge Group members chose to continue playing online monthly with two games, one at 1:00 followed by a quick break, then a second one at 2:15. By playing on line, they were able to talk to each other and discuss the various plays at the end of each hand.

Creative Cooking Group was a smaller group for this year, making it possible for all members to meet as a single group. They met monthly, taking turns being hostess of the month. The hostess plans the menu and each participant picks one item from the menu to make and bring to the dinner. Cooking tips/challenges, great food, lively and meaningful conversation shared and enjoyed by all.

Dining Out Group enjoyed jaunts out of town to The Twisted Lemon, The Lake house, and The Ancaster Mill this fall. Our holiday event was high tea at The Golden Teapot, further enhanced by the "feast" of Christmas lights at Glenhyrst. During the winter months, we will dine locally and hope the roads are ice free: the new East Indian restaurant, Ranagoli, the much loved Olde School. When the road conditions improve, we will venture out to West Plains, Quatrefoil, and Caroline Cellars, NOTL. Dates and times of day for outings vary to ensure all the members can join in at least some of the time. On average 12 – 16 members take part, enjoying delicious food and conversation.

Daytrippers Group kicked off the season in October with the Dundas Studio Tour and lunch at Bangkok Spoon. The Sanderson Centre was the venue for December with the English comedy O Christmas Tea and dinner at Hudson Public. There are many ideas and plans in the works for the upcoming new year including a visit to the Brantford Sanitation Site and a backstage tour of the Sanderson Centre.

Food with Thought Group met monthly on the second Thursday, taking turns hosting and sharing delicious pot luck dinners and conversation, both serious and entertaining. From September through December they met and, not surprisingly, both the US election and outcome provided much fodder for conversation. A topic is not stated prior to the meal as current events, individual commentary, or some humorous event "pepper" the evening and results in serious reflection or hilarious story telling.

Games Group met twice a month, the second Thursday and the fourth Monday at 1:30 p.m. playing both new and old games. Games took place outdoors in good weather and indoors in members' homes in the colder weather.

MahJongg Group met the 1st and 3rd Friday of each month in their pursuit of learning the game of North America Mahjongg. First wins, fun and friendships keep them coming back.

World Awareness Group met on the third Monday morning of the month. The group suggests topics to discuss each month. Since September, they have shared information and their ideas on the current situation of Afghan Women as well as keeping hopeful after the election in U.S. Often the discussions go on a totally different tangent, but they are always interesting. It is a wonderful opportunity to learn with your peers. The discussion in December focussed on writers and cultural appropriation. The group expresses their thanks to McCleister Funeral home and the Fire Hall on Fairview Road for allowing their group to meet in their facilities without charge.

Respectfully submitted by Roma M., Interest Groups Chair

Interest Groups

Monday Evening Book Club:

The Women, by Kristin Hannah, was the Monday Evening Book Club's read for December 2024. It is historical fiction following Frankie McGrath, a young nurse who serves in Viet Nam. The discussion was emotional and heartfelt. The Women explored the role of women in it and as well why women signed up. Most women who served did so as nurses, many of them being close to the front lines and risking their lives as they cared for wounded men. These nurses became highly skilled in treating conditions that would normally require extensive training and experience if even within the scope of regular peacetime nurses. When they returned to the United States they were not able to get treatment for themselves, although they often suffered from PTSD and could benefit from services. They were told there were no women serving in Viet Nam, not acknowledged for their service, were not welcomed home with dignity or gratefulness. They were not eligible for services or even compassion. Discussion was robust as some members had vivid first hand experiences of being young women during that time period and the poignant and tragic time when young men were subject to the "lottery" which sent them off to war, families lost their sons and fathers and then the realization that the Government had lied about the purpose of the American participation. The Women's Memorial for the Women Who Served in Viet Nam was not dedicated until November 11, 1993. This is an excellent book and one all present highly recommend. Barb M.



It was so nice to see you all on Monday night. What a

wonderful evening! Thank you so much Lynne for hosting and providing such delicious treats. Thank you too, Barb, for leading the discussion. I loved how you started with the video interview with the author. I learned a lot. Karen S.



Walking Group:

Christmas Eve walk feeding the birds and celebrating the snowy trail. Members are Bev G. , Jeanne C. , Linda S. and Dian K.



First Walk of 2025



Several members of the walking group braved the cold to step out in the new year. A good chat and coffee at Tim's was a good treat and reward. Happy and healthy 2025. Norah O.

Games Group:

Lots of fun was had by the Games Group playing *Brantfordopoly* on January 9th. Norah O.



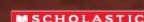
Join Marsha Forchuk Skrypuch for the launch of book one of her new trilogy



Under Attack
(Kidnapped From Ukraine #1),
at Riverside Bookshelf!

Thursday, January 16
5-7 PM
Riverside Bookshelf
32A Dundas St W
Paris, N3L 1G2

Illustration from Under Attack (Kidnapped From Ukraine #1), copyright © 2013 by Kim Dowling



2024–2025 EXECUTIVE

PRESIDENT IN NAME:

- Barbara Melara

PAST PRESIDENT:

- Janet Kempster

ROTATING PRESIDENTIAL TEAM:

- Anne Martin & Teddy Buzek—June to August,
- Elizabeth Capitano— September
- Pat Clemons—October
- Cookie Hadley—November
- Maria Timmons—December, January
- Catherine Sawyer- February
- Linda Tripp—March
- Dian Kuzyk—April
- Barbara Melara—May

SECRETARY:

Penelope Jeffery / Arlene Cass

TREASURER: Maria Timmons

STANDING COMMITTEE CHAIRS:

- Communications:** Sandra Hughes
- Interest Groups:** Roma Makkreel
- Membership:** Barb Scott
- Program:** Colette Wilson
- Scholarship:** Karen Innes
- Social:** Lynne Duncombe

Tax Receipts

Tax receipts have been issued for 2024. They were distributed at the November General Meeting and at various events through November and December. Tax receipts will be sent as email attachments in the next 2 weeks for those who did not already receive a hard copy.

Maria T.



January 22nd General Meeting

7:00 p.m., Zoom

CFUW January Speaker

This month Karen Stiller will speak to us about **The Art and Pleasures of Memoir Writing.**

Karen is a teacher of writing and a writing coach. Her work has appeared in publications like *The Walrus*, *Reader's Digest*, *Faith Today*, and *In Trust*. For 22 years she was senior editor of *Faith Today* (Canada's Christian magazine) and host of the Faith Today Podcast.

She has moderated the annual Religion and Society series at the University of Toronto, a debate series between leading atheists and theologians that seeks to generate critical conversations on matters of faith, society and public interest.

Karen has travelled extensively with her work and has written about life in refugee camps in South Sudan and Uganda, and community development projects in Senegal and Cambodia.

She has a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Non-Fiction and she is now working on a doctorate in The Sacred Art of Writing at Western Seminary in Holland Michigan. Her latest book, *Holiness*, published in 2023 explores how Holiness permeates our everyday messy lives.

Karen lives in Ottawa and has three adult children.

Linda T.



Social Updates

The Social Committee would like to thank everyone who came to the Holiday Get Together social and made the evening such a successful event!



Our next big endeavour will be the banquet at the AGM this year. Please mark **May 28, 2025** on your calendar as we prepare to celebrate the **80th Anniversary** of the University Womens Club Brantford! The ticket price will be \$70.00 and method of payment will be by cash, cheque or e-transfer to cfuwbrantfordfin@gmail.com. An exciting program will be announced at the January General Meeting by Zoom.

Lynne D.