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Leadership Team: President's Letter

We are certainly experiencing winter this year with all the cold weather and snow on the ground along with two significant snowfalls expected this coming week. Hopefully the weather cooperates for our upcoming Trivia Night and we have a fun evening. Spring will hopefully, be here soon, the snow will melt, the days will get warmer and for golfers like myself the links will be ready.

Our speaker for January was very inspiring and resulted in the creation of an interest group for those who are interested in memoir writing. The speakers we have for February look to be as interesting so I encourage you all to attend via Zoom.

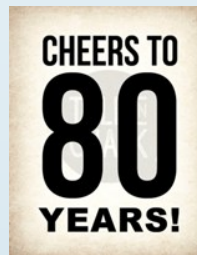
Our Nomination process for the 2025-2026 Leadership team is underway and the Leadership team is grateful to Pat McG. and Diane B. for volunteering to lead up the committee. I strongly encourage any of you who would like to get more involved to reach out to Pat or Diane. We are looking for people to take on President of the month role and we need someone to share the secretary role.

Membership renewals will start in March, so if you are thinking about starting a new Interest Group, make sure you talk to Roma M so she can add it to the Interest Group portion of the Membership Form.

It has been a pleasure to be President of the Month for December and January, and I would like to thank the Leadership Team for their support and for making my job an enjoyable one.

Your President for February is Catherine S.

Maria T
President of the Month



The Social Committee has been very fortunate to have members offer to help us with planning the May banquet. The ideas and plans that have been discussed are beginning to take shape and there is a definite feeling of anticipation and excitement emerging. This month each of us will receive an emailed invitation to the CFUW BANQUET AND 80th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION. Excitement builds on excitement so with that in mind look for new developments in the months leading up to May 28th.
Lynne D.

Help!

We are looking for this quilted banner that was created for our 50th Anniversary. It was stored in a blue cloth bag. If you have it or know where it is, please contact Anne M. or Bev G.



Dates to Remember:

- 1 Start of Black History Month
- 2 Groundhog Day
- 14 Valentine's Day.
- 17 Family Day
- 17 Random Acts of Kindness Day
- 20 National Love Your Pet Day
- 22 World Thinking Day
- 23 World Understanding and Peace Day

NOMINATIONS for our 2025-26 Executive

The Nominations Process has started. Pat Mc. has volunteered to Chair the Nominations Committee again this year, assisted by Diane B. If you have an interest in participating in this important process, please contact Pat or Diane.

On February 5th, we met with the Executive leadership team where a number of people stepped up to take on roles. Via email we received quite a few volunteers. We do hope we captured everyone's wishes accurately. If not, please do let us know right away.

The Leadership Team for 2025-26 will be comprised of the following positions: President in name, President of the Month, Past President, Treasurer, Secretary, 6 Committee Chairs: Communications, Interest Groups, Membership, Program, Scholarship, and Social. Advocacy will be an ad hoc committee reporting to the President of the Month, and therefore not on the Leadership Team.

Status Report:

1. President in Name: Barbara M. has agreed to stay on and to be the contact person for CFUW Brantford at National and Ontario Council, and represent CFUW Brantford at monthly or periodic Zoom meetings with National and Ontario Council.
2. President of the Month: AVAILABLE: We have 2 months still to fill, so please do let Pat or Diane know if you can fill in for one of the available months. Role: to act as President for one month of the year: create an agenda and run the Executive and General Meetings for one month of the year, be the point person for things arising in the club for that one month, and write a summary of the month in the newsletter. If any of these tasks are onerous, you can outsource. For example, one of our Presidents gets help writing the President's message for the newsletter, another gets help with ensuring the agenda contains the monthly tasks and any business arising from past meetings.
3. Past President: Janet K. has agreed to continue in this position as it is now defined as sitting as a Trustee on the Scholarship Committee. The work of creating the AGM Booklet will be managed by a volunteer who will work with the Secretary.
4. Treasurer: Maria T. has agreed to continue in her role as Treasurer. If you would like to apprentice for that job down the road, Maria is a great source of information..
5. Secretary: AVAILABLE Arlene C. has agreed to stay on IF someone will share the job with her. This is a great job if you like summarizing decisions that are made at monthly Executive, General and Scholarship meetings. All you need is some familiarity with WORD, can take Minutes, two or three meetings per month - so about 6-8 hours per month - shared would mean every second month, or however it is worked out. There are members who would be happy to help out as you learn the ropes.
6. Committee Chairs: Note: Advocacy will be an ad hoc Committee that reports to the President of the Month, and therefore is not on the Leadership Team for 2024-25. The responsibilities will entail managing the Club's process for allocating International dues and managing the annual resolution process.
 - 6.1. Communications: Sandra H. and her team (Marsha S. - web and email, Mary P. - Facebook, Leslie L., and Gloria S. - good will and out-reach) will continue in their roles. The new position is Meeting Technology, helping the Club to manage hybrid General Meetings and virtual meetings for Interest Groups. It would be great if we could train a few people to help to keep the club connected virtually.
 - 6.2. Interest Groups: Roma M. will continue in this role, managing 'the heart of the club' ensuring that we are connected in small groups to enjoy common interests including Book and Bridge clubs, Walking, Dining Out, Creative Cooking, and World Awareness Groups, to name a few.
 - 6.3 Membership: Barb S has agreed to stay on as Chair for another year with help from Marsha Skrypuch, managing the membership renewal process, liaising with the Interest Group Chair, and welcoming new members.
 - 6.4 Program: Available Colette W. has agreed to stay on as Chair for another year sharing the duties with Linda T. , managing the speakers for General Meetings and the AGM. They are looking for a third person to assist. Many hands make light work !!!
 - 6.5 Scholarship: Karen I has agreed to stay on as Chair, and says how grateful she is for all the support she had this year with technology and updating the school contacts and Scholarship Constitution. The hard work done this year will set up the Scholarship Committee for years to come.
 - 6.6 Social: Lynne D. has accepted Social again this year. A great job last year and we look forward to many exciting things this year! This role involves the set up and clean up for General Meetings, and scheduling two people to provide refreshments at the meetings. This role also sets up a sub committee to arrange the location for the annual Banquet. The reason we enjoy the ambiance and gracious hosting at General Meetings and the AGM is because of the good work of this committee.

The time is perfect if you are interested in participating because we have great bench strength for you to learn and enjoy the leadership process. If you would like to discuss any of these opportunities, please feel free to contact Pat or Diane.

Pat McG. p.mcginnis@sympatico.ca

Diane B. dbradley1359@gmail.com



Scholarship News

As the high schools begin the second semester, our A Award applications will be e-mailed out in the middle of February. Please encourage your eligible relatives, neighbors, and friends to apply. The scholarship committee is very grateful for the time, expertise, and persistence of Marsha S. and Maria T. for getting our applications onto the CFUW website. Applications are directly accessible at <https://www.cfuwbrantford.org/scholarships-and-donations/> Karen I.



International Dues:

The decision was made in the January general meeting that our international dues of \$1678 were distributed evenly between 2 charities, CUSO and Food for the Hungry. Cheques were mailed to the respective charities in February. Maria T.



Canadian-Ukrainian author Marsha Forchuk Skrypuch launched her latest book, *Under Attack*, at Riverside Bookshelf in Paris, Ontario, on Thursday, January 16, 2025.

The event marked the first public appearance for the Brantford-based author since the release of her new novel, which is the inaugural installment in her *Kidnapped from Ukraine* series. Set in Mariupol during the early days of Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine, *Under Attack* follows the harrowing journey of a family separated by war. The story, grounded in historical accuracy, focuses on a 12-year-old girl and her mother who are torn apart after being forced through Russian filtration camps and re-education facilities. Skrypuch, known for her powerful depictions of historical injustices, said the book aims to bring attention to the ongoing war in Ukraine and its

global implications.

"The war in Ukraine is still happening. People are dying, and it affects all of us. Russia is a neighbor of Canada, too, and this war has broader consequences," said Skrypuch in an interview with *BrantBlog* during the book launch event.

Riverside Bookshelf, an independent bookstore that opened in 2024, hosted the launch as part of its mission to support Canadian authors and spotlight books that address significant global issues. Alison Fishburn, the store's owner, expressed her excitement about hosting Skrypuch.

The second and third books in the *Kidnapped from Ukraine* series, *Standoff* and *Still Alive*, are scheduled for release in October 2025 and January 2026, respectively.

As the event drew to a close, Skrypuch emphasized the importance of supporting independent bookstores like Riverside Bookshelf and participating in community initiatives such as Read4BCHS.

"This bookstore may be small, but it's powerful," she said. "Independent bookstores support authors, just as authors should support bookstores. And events like Read4BCHS show how a community can come together to make a difference. That's what makes this day so meaningful."

The Read4BCHS campaign runs from February 4 to 26, with participants logging their reading hours and raising funds for pediatric and infant care at Brantford General Hospital. Prizes include an Apple iPad for top fundraisers and an Amazon Kindle for the top reader. Riverside Bookshelf, meanwhile, remains committed to its mission of promoting Canadian authors and publishers, offering Brant County readers a space to discover new stories that inspire thought and conversation. (From Brant Blog.ca January 17, 2025)

Here's tip lady again



1. Start in the middle.
2. View your memoir writing as an exploration process. You will discover, remember and have AHA moments as you go along.
3. You can go theme to theme like my father did.
4. You can choose one big theme or reality from your life. I wrote a spiritual memoir about being a minister's wife.
5. Memoirs are curated offerings of memory and meaning.



January General Meeting, An Excellent Learning Experience on a Zoom Call

Author Karen Stiller inspired members with her workshop on how to write a memoir. In fact, members decided to create an interest group to follow up on what she started. The group details can be found on page 5 of this newsletter.



Due to a winter storm Trivia Night was postponed to Wednesday, March 5th, same time, same venue.

Please contact Lynn H. if you have any questions.

Trivia Night Report February 2025

Since we have so many new members, I thought that I would give a little bit of history about Trivia Night. Way back in late 2007, Brenda Malvern, former member Diane White and I thought that we would copy the Kiwanis example and run a Trivia Night as a fundraiser for the Scholarship Fund. Briefly, it consists of 10 rounds of 10 questions each, with prizes for the top three teams. Questions such as "In what province would you find Punkydoodle's Corners"? No videos, photos or sound bites.

Our first event was held on the evening of Wednesday, February 13th, 2008 at The Dunsdon Legion and a good time was had by all! I'm not exactly sure of the year, but after Diane left CFUW, Brenda and I were very fortunate to team up with Colette W. and Dian K. Four people instead of three was great! We each have our jobs to do –keeping track of team registrations, signing contracts, arranging for pizza, writing thank yous, contacting past participants, finding volunteers, stuffing envelopes, making score sheets, designing the poster, transporting prizes and books, writing reports, emceeing, arranging for printing, keeping track of money and receipts and of course writing the questions. It has worked out very well. This year, in three weeks time, we will hold our 16th Trivia Night (we didn't hold one in 2021 or 2022) and as of last year, a total of \$32,182.16 has been added to the Scholarship account.

In the beginning, I would solicit prizes from local restaurants and merchants but members have been very generous and recently we have relied on all of you to provide items as door prizes. We are asking for new items for the prize table - nothing big. It could be a box of chocolates that you received for Christmas, a pretty mug, a gift certificate that you don't need. We also need books and CDs in really good condition. Barb Perry and her team take care of the sale. If you will be arriving early as a helper, please bring your books with you that night. For all others, you can deliver items to me at 17 Chestnut Avenue. So far, I have one prize and two bags of books so take this opportunity to look around your house to see what you can donate – no need to purchase anything!

Our biggest request is for you to sign up because if we don't have teams, we can't replenish the Scholarship account. The cost is only \$25 (\$100 per team) and for that, you get a chance to purchase great books and CDS for \$2, a chance to win a door prize, a chance to win a generous gift certificate to a local restaurant in our Heads or Tails game (we actually charge \$2 to enter), a slice of pizza donated by Dominos, a soft drink and an evening of fun and laughter! To date, we have 16 teams and we would like 30. If you don't have a team, please let me know and we will do our best to put you on one. Please sign up asap so that we can relax. If you cannot attend, I'm sure that Maria would be very willing to accept donations to the Scholarship Fund!

This year, it was decided that in an attempt to recruit more members, we would include a CFUW brochure in the team envelopes. Dian KuK, Barb S. and Colette W. decided what would be included and where it should be placed and gave the information to Janet Rubas who created the brochure. I sent the final copy to the printer on Sunday, picked up the brochures on Monday and they will be delivered to Dian to put in the envelopes on Thursday. It was a great idea and we appreciate the work done in finding effective text and in designing. The brochure will be available for members at the March meeting.

See you at Trivia Night!!

Lynn H.

On behalf of the . Trivia Night Committee

Interests and Interest Groups

FEBRUARY - BLACK HISTORY MONTH

The Federal Government designated February as Black History Month in the 1970s to invite Canadians to increase their awareness of and appreciation for “the many achievements and contributions of Black Canadians and their communities throughout history...” The canada.ca website details that “Black people were once enslaved”, and that it was not until 2008 that the Motion to designate February as Black History Month was finally passed in the Senate. Over forty years ... a long time to complete Canada’s parliamentary process.

Message from Minister St-Onge to Canadians about the Flag’s 60th anniversary

Dear fellow citizens,

This February 15 marks the 60th anniversary of our flag. Since it was first raised in 1965, this national emblem represents the values we all cherish – generosity, openness, respect and equality. A flag that could not be mistaken for any other, it connects us to our national identity, to our Canadian pride and to each other. Seeing our bright red and white flag with its maple leaf flying reminds us of the home we all share.

This year, more than ever, not only do we have to celebrate our flag but also remind ourselves what it represents: our values, our resilience and our sovereignty.

In the last week, public displays of national pride have become more prominent following external economic pressures. The growing sense of unity and national identity is an occasion to engage Canadians to mark the flag’s anniversary.

The kick-off to mark the anniversary of our flag will take place on Valentine’s Day, February 14, under the theme “Celebrate our love for the Canadian Flag.” I invite you to join the celebrations this week.

Here’s how you can participate:

- **Raise your flag** wherever you are to mark this special day.
- **Show your pride** and share your photos on social media using #CanadianFlag and @CdnHeritage.
- **Choose Canada** by cheering on Team Canada during the 4 Nations Face-Off hockey game on February 15 at the Bell Centre in Montréal or join the excitement from home, with friends and family.
- **Look out for illuminations near you**, as iconic sites across Canada will be lit up in our flag’s colours on the evenings of February 15 and 16.

Visit the Canadian Heritage website to learn more about the flag and its history, and discover fun activities for the whole family.

Together, let’s choose Canada and celebrate our love for the Canadian flag by flying it proudly from coast to coast to coast and making this a celebration to remember.



Interest Groups

As Interest Group Choices for the following year are presently being finalized now is the time to come forward with any suggestion you may have. In order for the suggestion to be offered, you must be willing to be the contact/organizer for at least the first year.

Please note that Golf did not run last year as there was no contact/organizer. If you are interested in helping in this area, please let me know.

Roma M. Interest Group Chair

New Interest Group suggestion: February 2025

A new group, **Memoir Writing**, has been suggested with Lucie C. volunteering to be the contact/organizer/leader. Lucie has a background of writing, having worked in film and television for 25 years. She has written and story edited documentaries and dramas that have appeared on CBC and NFB. She has also taught writing in the media programs at Ryerson University, York University’s Film program as well as other places. She’s never written a memoir but feels she would like to now and is keen to get this group going as soon as possible.

If you are interested in belonging, please contact either Lucie or me (Roma M.) Actual time and date of group meeting will be decided by the group.

Roma M.

The 2025 Ontario Council Resolutions are now ready for review!

Our Advocacy Committee has received two resolutions for consideration at our 2025 AGM. These are now available for review and discussion by your clubs. They are:

CFUW Orillia - Funding for Post-Secondary Education in Ontario
CFUW Owen Sound - The Establishment of a Seniors’ Advocate
These resolutions and the guidelines for responding to them are posted on our website under the [Advocacy >> Ontario Council Policy & Resolutions](#) tab.

Books, Libraries and Reading Days:

February 14

Library Lovers Day

International Book Giving Day

Read to Your Child Day

February 20 .

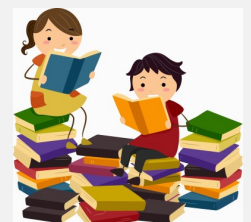
Clean out your bookcase day

April 2

International Children’s Book Day

April 23 –26

Brantford Symphony Book Sale



INTEREST GROUPS

Dining Out Group:

The Dining Out Group likes to stay close to home during the winter months so we were delighted to learn about a new East Indian restaurant in Brantford called Rangoli's. The colourful art on the wall is joyful, as is the music. The food was delicious (a few of us were grateful for a dish of yoghurt to cool down the tandoori dishes)! We recommend this restaurant for its good food, relaxed atmosphere, lovely setting

and charming staff.

Lin F.



Creative Cooking:

Our hostess, Betsy C., ensured that we had a great learning experience as we created recipes from a Glenhyrst recipe book that reminded me to search for my copy. The food was delicious. Good fun, conversation and food made for a special evening! Sandra H.

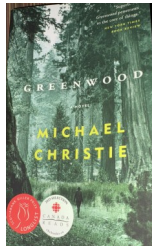


Monday Night Book Group:

Our group held a stimulating and insightful discussion of the rise of authoritarianism and how the characteristics of authoritarians are playing out in today's world, particularly in the USA. Ruth Ben-Ghiat's *Strongmen*, based on extensive research work, takes the reader through the emotional characteristics of the "strongman", how they rise to power and their eventual downfall in an easy to read and informative format. As you read the book, it becomes glaringly apparent that the current influence of strongmen and their rising power present an increasing threat to the existing world democratic order. The parallels between the rise of authoritarians past and today serve as an immediate warning of the political climate that countries currently face. This book is a must read for those interested in the events in the USA today as it gives context and concise understanding as to the forces that threaten democracy and those liberties we may take for granted. This book is an excellent primer on authoritarianism that is both thought-provoking, relative and informative. It provides numerous "jumping off" points for interesting discussion! Those who don't know history are doomed to repeat it." Edmund Burke
 "Remember that all through history, there have been tyrants and murderers, and for a time, they seem invincible. But in the end, they always fall. Always." Ghandi Lynne M.



Thursday Book Club: Our February meeting was on Zoom due to the icy conditions. We discussed *Greenwood*, written by a Canadian author, Michael Christie. The two major themes of the environment (trees mostly) and family (the Greenwoods) were tightly interwoven through four generations. The book mentions WW1, the Dust Bowl, and clearcutting to convey an historical sense of now for each generation.



The majority of our group enjoyed the book and the writing style while some members found the book too long. Bev G.

January Book Club Review:

We started the New year discussing James McBride's book *The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store*. This book received mixed reviews during group discussion.

The book starts with the discovery of a body in a well in the contemporary town of Pottsville Pa. (This storyline is not completed until the last few chapters of the book).

The reader is then taken back to the 1930's where we are introduced to a multitude of characters who inhabit Chicken Hill a "suburb" of Pottstown. Each individual has a separate story with their own issues, struggles and feelings. Yet, each "short" story, with lots of tangents and back stories, is integrated to the main story line which is about a mixed -race community and how the people interact with each other and unite together in common purpose when it is needed. There is no main protagonist and no central story line. Despite race, religion and class there is a community.

McBride's uses a blend of literary and historical fiction (Pottstown, Chicken Hill and Pennhurst Asylum are not fictional places) and humour to address black/white racism and antisemitism. His purpose through the book is to "humanize" the complications of discussing race in America, the task of understanding other people, and offering the suggestion that it is possible to jump over the differences that separate us. This is a message novel – "every act of being is a chance to improve the world".

Too many characters, too many sub plots, too slow moving or an accurate illustration of a diverse community with unique individuals who chose how to let themselves be known and seen by others in a common cause? Rhynda B.

Walking Group:



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

Welcome to our Speaker for the General Meeting on March 26, 2025: Stephanie McLarty

- award winning young entrepreneur
- champion of responsible, sustaining corporate practices
- assisted Rogers in disposal of surplus equipment
- launched REfficient, helping companies recycle
- appointed to the International Electrotechnical Commission

Please bring your questions about your obsolete devices. How do we erase information safely? Where do we dispose of them in an environmentally friendly way? And more?

Dian K., Program Committee



General Meeting:

February 26, 2025, 7:00 p.m. by Zoom

Program: February 26 General Meeting Speakers

The High Ladies began as two moms seeking a creative outlet separate from parenting and other responsibilities. Familiar with cannabis themselves, they bravely set out to open a conversation around mindful and respectful use of cannabis. Through a podcast format, they aimed to break down the stigma related to cannabis, and offer a mature and rational perspective on cannabis consumption. Aided by the legalization of cannabis, they made it their job to dispel myths about the industry and even help politicians understand its potential benefits and its contribution to the Canadian economy.

The High Ladies Podcast has gained national recognition with appearances on Breakfast Television, and awards such as Best Cannabis Podcast, a nomination for Barrie Women in Business Visionary Award, and they have published **High Aspirations: A Commemorative Look at Canadian Cannabis.**



The High Ladies, Annie Dillabough and Amanda La Touche, will share information such as what cannabis is, how it works, the difference between tcp and cbd, benefits and downsides of cannabis, and what to expect in a cannabis store. They approach this serious topic with both humour and respect, aiming to educate and inform with accurate and documented facts about this still enigmatic topic.

*This meeting will be held on zoom, starting at 7:00 pm.
Colette W.

Speakers for the 2024/25 General Meetings

The Program Committee is pleased to present the roster of speakers for upcoming season. They are:

January: *Karen Stiller, a teacher and author who leads workshops in memoir writing.*

February: *Madame High Ladies, experts in the ins and outs of cannabis use.*

March: *Stephanie McLarty, an award-winning entrepreneur whose business is the recycling of computer parts.*

April: *Brian Wood, curator the Alexander Graham Bell Homestead and expert in local history.*

Colette W.