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Message from the Leadership Team

December at last! It will be a relief to see the end of 2020 - a year of unprecedented isolation and concern caused by an invisible enemy that requires 'the good guys to wear masks and refrain from acts of hugging'.

The good news is that we have survived 2020! We have been smart about wearing masks, practicing physical distancing, washing and sanitizing. We have learned technologies that we did not even know existed in good old 2019. We have become Zoomers! As individuals, we have reached out to one another with phone calls, physically distanced visits, and virtual tea-parties. As a club, we have risen to the challenge of staying connected and relevant - and we have created opportunities to get to know one another better. Our Program Committee has dedicated General Meetings to presenting profiles on some of our longer-term members and then playing 'Guess Who' with clues about ten other members. This format has created a very fine way to celebrate our 75th Anniversary.

It has not been easy. it is inevitable that some days we feel despondent as we ruminate about how tough it is not to see our children and grandchildren and best friends at birthdays and holidays. Psychologists have warned us that boredom and isolation can lead to depression - and many of us are sharing links to podcasts and articles about how boredom and isolation can also lead to creativity and engagement. I think we have learned when to nest/have pajama days, when to reach out for help, and how to create, share, and draw on our 'bucket list' of strategies to pull ourselves out of the doldrums.

One fine accomplishment has been our support of Nova Vita's "Hope for the Holidays". On December 7th, we presented \$2,045 to Nova Vita to distribute to the women using their services. It is hard to imagine how difficult it must be to deal with creating a safe place for your children at any time - but at this time of year with Christmas looming and in the midst of a pandemic, and with such an increase in domestic violence because of Covid restrictions, we have reached into our hearts - and our pocket books - and given generously. Something to consider moving forward this month might be to engage your

family or friends in sponsoring a family at Christmas. Other members are replacing traditional gifts with donations to our Scholarship Fund and other worthy causes.

Another strategy has been to focus on national and international issues. The Ad Hoc Committee on Future Directions for CFUW Brantford 2020-21 has derived a lot of satisfaction from delving into CFUW, its financial challenges, projections for future viability, and its relationship with GWI. We have used our brains in ways that we have not used them since we worked for a living. Researching the issues, communicating with other clubs, liaising with Ontario Council and CFUW National has helped us to create some recommendations for CFUW that we think can be instrumental in dealing with some of the key issues they face. Similarly, the Ad Hoc Committee on Long Term Care has done an excellent job of forging relationships with CARP, RTO and CFUW at both the provincial and national levels to inform and influence the considerations of (and ideally the policies that emerge from) politicians and the inquiry regarding long term care. Other members have focused on Grand River Grannies helping women and children in Africa, supporting education in Bangladesh, pursuing environmental causes, and by using our time, talent and treasure to support charities and the arts in a larger way this year because of the unprecedented challenges.

On a more individual basis, members talk about knitting hats for people in need in Brantford, or hopping into their car to drive the back roads and enjoy the changing seasons, making a day trip out of buying nuts, meats, or baked goods. One member says she leaves her abode every day to walk in nature, while another says she makes weekly telephone calls to friends who live alone. One member has returned to stain-glass making, while another has taken up pottery. One person is taking a course at Yale on the psychology of well-being, and has lots of tips to share about how to shift perspective about what really makes us happy. A few people have tackled storage bins and closets, have cleaned up stacks of photo albums, and have 'Marie Kondo'd' their sock drawers.

And how about those who make beautiful cards or create dresses and costumes for grandchildren, while others drop off food at the food bank, serve soup for the soul, or make muffins and drop them off on front porches around town. I like the idea of meditating every afternoon, and have had the opportunity of engaging in a twelve-week 'power of eight intention' that has replaced feeling demoralized and enraged by the news with hope and an imagined ideal future. Another 'coping strategy' - which I caution may not be the best one for those of us beyond seventy - was to adopt an 8 week old puppy who has taken several weeks to be capable of sleeping through the night. Buda is just over three months old now - and has provided me with more laughter in the past few weeks than I have had in a year... belly laughs, tender chuckles, and Dick Van Dyke antics as I step into an 'ooops' in house training.

We have also grown as a community over the past few months even in the midst of Covid guidelines. Interest Groups have organized 'distance visits' with one another in beautiful locations like Glenhyrst. Individuals have arranged to meet for walks, bike rides, kayak trips, or to gather in back yards. Some Zoom meetings are happening with Bridge and Book Clubs, and some 'tea-parties' have sprung up thanks to one or two people initiating the connections. We have shared jokes and bad puns through e-mails, and supported one another as we have bouts of sadness or impatience.

For decades, we have offset these dreary winter months of cold weather and dwindling daylight with holiday baking, socializing, carol-singing, Christmas concerts, and entertaining, not to mention our CFUW Holiday Potluck. We can't discount the grief that comes from knowing that some of us will not see family for Christmas for the first time ever. At times like this, it is important to acknowledge our feelings. Be blue. Then try counting your blessings. One member keeps a jar that she fills with notes about things that have brought her pleasure each week, and reviews them all at New Year's. Another has a book of gratitude that she writes in every Sunday. My step children gave me a glass container labelled 'A Dose of Daily Love'. In it there are scraps of paper on which they have written things that they love about me - from my French toast breakfasts to hilarious comments about some of my (many) idiosyncrasies. Each morning, I can hardly wait to put the coffee on, and reach into the jar.

Program has risen to the challenge to replace our annual Potluck with a Christmas Zoom that will take place on Wednesday, December 16th (note that this is the third Wednesday of the month) at 7 pm. I hope to see you - dressed in the colours of the season, with refreshments at hand, ready to enjoy one another's company, end the year with a big sigh of relief, much celebration of all that we have accomplished, and a collective promise for supporting one another as we focus on staying safe and healthy and putting the pandemic behind us.

Betsy C. is our President for December. Brenda M. is our President for January.

Happy Holidays to everyone, and best wishes for a safe and healthy new year.

Lin F., President of the month for November

Happy
Holidays!

CFUW Ad Hoc Committee, Future Directions for CFUW Brantford 2020-22

Our CFUW Brantford Executive directed their Ad Hoc Committee to write a second letter of concern to CFUW National in November.

Key points in our letter are:

- **Cause for Concern:** In February, 2020, our Executive had a serious look at CFUW's projections - that the unrestricted reserves would be mostly depleted by 2021-22, leaving CFUW without the financial capacity to continue. The Ad Hoc Committee was struck to determine what this potential situation would mean for CFUW Brantford, what our alternatives would be, how we would protect our Scholarship Charitable Trust, and to make recommendations to the Executive after doing a thorough investigation.

- **Makeup of our Ad Hoc Committee:** On our Ad Hoc Committee are members who have expertise in banking, accounting, audit, mathematics, administration, education, and public service. We have members who are relatively new to CFUW, and two who are long-time members, one of whom is second generation CFUW Brantford, with her mother being one of the founding members.

- **Findings:** What emerged from our collective research was the realization that many clubs feel that the focus at CFUW National has been on fixing the financials and operations of GWI *at the expense of CFUW*. At the grassroots level - clubs across Canada - the focus seems to be on whether or not GWI is a "good organization" instead of on the need to right the relationship with GWI, remove external organizations from the CFUW constitution, and address the financial strain that has resulted from forced membership in an organization and denial of financial support for the increases in GWI dues.

- **Where we stand relative to CFUW:** We reiterated that we see ourselves as allies of CFUW, that some of our members are experts in business, accounting, communications, and strategic thinking, and one or two have said that they "will do anything" to help CFUW heal from the GWI divide, address CFUW National financial challenges, and help CFUW become the strong, independent, national organization that we depend on for advocacy, resolutions, education, and relationships across Canada and throughout the world. We also expressed a desire to stay connected with a national organization that lobbies for the rights, freedoms, and education of women and girls nationally and internationally. We emphasized that the best future for our Club is to remain part of CFUW, that we are an aging group of women who rely on our national affiliation for advocacy and education. One example is that our MPP and MP are anti-abortion. They advocate for pro-life and participate in marches.

It is possible that they will initiate or support legislation to restrict the rights of women and girls over their own bodies and their freedom of choice. We rely on a larger community of women to advocate with us to protect our rights. Another example is that our Ad Hoc Committee on Long Term Care is affiliated with CARP and RTO and working with Ontario Council and CFUW to lobby the Ontario Government and the Federal Government for legislation, a new model of care, policies and programs that will address the vulnerable state/ quality of care that our seniors experience in long term care facilities.

- **Offering our perspective on the problem:** We suggested that it might be possible that the CFUW Board is acting on all the recommendations from the Mediation Working Group, and working their very hardest to rectify CFUW's financial situation, build a strategic plan and operational review - and likely feeling very frustrated by the criticism and continual negative feedback from clubs across Canada. We speculated that the issue is a discrepancy between your BEING in control and BEING SEEN to be in control. We wonder if CFUW has a credibility problem that is the result of the perceived lack of leadership over the past several years relative to righting CFUW's Articles and Bylaws, and the perceived focus on GWI to the detriment of CFUW. We strongly recommended that this issue of removing Article 4 be addressed in the immediate future, perhaps by a strong statement from experts such as legal advisors, mediator, articles and bylaws committee, etc, - and resolved by Special General Meeting before the May 1st deadline for dues, rather than waiting until the 2021 AGM, when we anticipate that many clubs will not have paid their dues because the relationship with GWI has not been addressed. We realize that this letter of concern is not going to be easily responded to in writing. However, we hope to engage in conversation with CFUW until our Ad Hoc Committee can confidently advise CFUW Brantford to continue its relationship with CFUW and stand down our work on exploring alternatives.

Lin F., Jane B., Joan H., Patti K., Nora L.,
Brenda M., Norah O

December 6th

On the anniversary of the Montreal Polytechnique Massacre and during the 16 Days of Activism a group of members joined Janet R. in a Zoom session. We viewed the CBC documentary, **In Search of a Perfect World** with Peter Mansbridge. The documentary was made in 2018 marking the 70th anniversary of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Then and now, the very idea of the declaration seems in peril. We watched the documentary together to learn and build hope for the future. December 10, 2020 is International Human Rights Day and the final day of 16 Days of Activism.

CFUW Ad Hoc Advocacy Committee on LTC: Update

Some Facts: More than 8 in 10 deaths from COVID are linked to LTC Homes in Canada. As of Dec 8th, there have been 3,816 deaths in Ontario. (In Canada, 12, 777.)

Percentage of homes affected By Covid-19	Percentage of Residents who have died
For Profit: 48.2%	5%
Non-Profit: 47.9%	3%
Municipal: 44%	1.1%

Ontario LTC homes with COVID-19 outbreaks

Only a third of the 78,163 beds in Ontario facilities remain at the 1972 standard, referred to as C, but they account for 57 per cent of the province's 1,691 reported COVID-19 deaths (as of June) in long-term care homes. Buildings that operate at the C standard may have four-person shared wards and communal dining rooms where hundreds of people are brought together for meals.

Source: CBC Marketplace

What has the Ontario Government done?

Announced creation of 30,000 LTC beds over 10 years providing tailored incentives to address the needs of developers in different markets: rural, mid-size, urban, and large urban. It also introduces an up-front development grant to address high cost barriers to construction.

Bill 13 has passed second reading which addresses minimum standard of care.

Announced Ontario long-term care residents will get 4 hours of direct care daily by 2025.

Ontario has asked Red Cross to send in Resident Aides in 7 long term care homes to help with daily activities, reporting and documentation, and overseeing the work of the long-term care team. This request has been called a band aid solution (OLTCA) and also unsafe as the resident aides are not qualified if asked to help with lifts and other activities.

The Independent Commission has been sending Interim Reports to the Ontario government but there doesn't seem to be any action on the government's part to take up these recommendations. The IC will still be providing a full report in April.

Marg E.

INTEREST GROUPS & ACTIVITIES

Monday Evening Bridge Group:

The Monday Evening Bridge Group continues to meet virtually, playing with online Bridge Base Online. Playing on Monday December 7 were Rhynda B, Bev G., Dian K, Brenda M, Anne M, Marla M. Catherine S, and Barb S. The winners were Dian K, and Anne M. Thanks again to Catherine S and Dian K for setting the tables and recording and reporting scores. Next play date- January 4, 2021. With the vaccine around the corner fingers crossed we may play in person before the end of the next year.

Thursday Book Club:

This is How it Always Is by Laurie Frankel was the book read this month by the Thursday Book Club. This is a story of love, family, and acceptance. It is also the story of young Claude who has gender dysphoria. Although Frankel chose to make the family almost too accepting, as some in our discussion mentioned, the story was balanced by the honest confusion, fears and emotion displayed. We see heartbreak and prejudice and mistakes made along the way. There were lessons to be learned within the pages of this book so is a recommended read.



Walking Group: Here are some of us trying to feed the chickadees. Norah O.



Monday Evening Book Club:

The Monday group met online through Zoom, on Tuesday the 17th, to discuss ***Good and Mad : the Revolutionary Power of Women's Anger***, by Rebecca Traister. The book traces the expression of women's anger, showing how it has ignited movements such as that of the suffragettes, that have made a difference for women's rights. It looks at the efforts of women until the present, to achieve equal rights in the U.S. It is a thought-provoking and discussion-sparking book. The next meeting will be a discussion of books we have read on the topic of Ruth Bader Ginsburg. It will take place on Monday, Dec. 14th.

Donation to Nova Vita



Anne M., Bev G., Lin F.,
Janet K.
absent: Maria T.

CFUW Brantford is making a difference!

How Will You Make a Difference This Holiday Season?

Sponsor a Family

Determine your budget or team capacity. Family size varies so sponsors can request maximum persons in family or number of families to be sponsored.

This personalized option will provide you with a list of items to help make your sponsor family's holiday season a little more merry and bright.

Donate Gift Cards

Requested Values: \$10, \$25 & \$50

Suggested Stores: Giant Tiger, Walmart, Grocery Stores, Best Buy, Canadian Tire, Sport Chek, Indigo, Toys R Us, Visa or MC, Local Eateries and Businesses.

Make a Financial Donation

Donations can be made online at www.cfuwbrantford.org or by contacting a member of our Community Development team. You can request how you would like us to direct the funding.

For Everyone's Safety

- Due to COVID-19, we cannot accept physical donations without an appointment. Last date to donate is December 23.
- Donations are placed in quarantine for a maximum of 2 days before they can be transferred on to recipients.
- We can only accept items that are new in original packaging, safe (check expiry dates), and unopened.

Thank you for your generous donations to Hope for the Holidays! Our Club has raised \$2,045. to help women and children over the holidays. The CFUW Hope for the Holidays Team presented the cheque to Nova Vita on December 7th.

There remain opportunities to contribute beyond our club's initiative. Nova Vita's capacity is stretched to breaking. There is a terrific increase in domestic violence because of the pandemic and the three major fund-raisers were cancelled because of the need for physical distancing. Please consider how your family or friends can sponsor a family and contact Nova Vita direct. In the meantime, let us give ourselves a hearty 'well done'. We have made a difference!

Healthy Aging Without Walls - a FREE interactive phone program for adults 50+. Call in to participate in trivia, health and wellness seminars, or discussion groups from the comfort of your home. Supported by the Beckett Adult Leisure Centre.

Call 519-756-3261 x 5569 or visit Brantford.ca/HealthyAgingWithoutWalls to learn more.

2020 –2021 EXECUTIVE

PRESIDENT IN NAME:

- Janet Rubas

PAST PRESIDENT:

- Brenda Malvern

ROTATING PRESIDENTIAL TEAM:

- Elizabeth Capitano
- Lin Fines
- Lynn Haylock
- Brenda Malvern

- Anne Martin

- Diane Morgan

- Dian Kuzyk

SECRETARY: Gay Henley

TREASURER: Mieke Schroeder

STANDING COMMITTEE CHAIRS:

- Advocacy:** Betsy Capitano

- Communications:** Sandra Hughes

- Interest Groups:** Jane Binkley

- Membership:** Dian Kuzyk

- Program:** Anne Martin

- Scholarship:** Naomi Kral

- Social:** Lynn Haylock

Members:



All the best to you and yours throughout Christmas and the New Year!

To those who have just had surgery or are battling the cold or flu or other illness, we wish you a speedy recovery and the joy of Christmas and New Years.

All the best to Marsha as she gets better.

CFUW Brantford Needs Help!

CFUW has written a guide that will help us to amend our by-laws so that our organization can function smoothly and efficiently. Over the past year we have been viewing our by-laws with the idea that they need to be updated to better reflect our situation now. One example is that we need to include references to electronic votes and meetings.

This job is one that requires a team rather than an individual. We hope you will volunteer to help with this task. Please let an Executive member know you are interested or send an email to cfuw-brantford@yahoo.ca Thank you! Janet R.

75th Anniversary - Calling All Treasure Hunters!

Just a reminder that we will be centralizing our 'treasures' from the last seventy-five years.

WHAT: Do you have physical material, boxes of files, information or documents on your computer that might be valuable to our Club?

WHO: Do you know who the key members are to engage in discerning what to keep and where to find it? Are you a long-term member with a perspective about what to preserve and what to shred? Do you know who might have key information about who we are and what we have accomplished?

HOW: Do you have some knowledge of technology and how we might store both archives and current information? We are hoping that we can use technology and a hard-copy library to preserve who we are in a way that makes it accessible now and in the future. There may be some things that would be well served if they were loaded onto our website. Please e-mail, phone or text Lin F about the treasures you know about and whether you would like to participate in our January Zoom about our treasures. Lin F

HOLIDAY ~ZOOM~ PARTY

Wednesday, December 16th – 7:00 p.m.

Wine & Cheese? Coffee & Cookies?

Sherry & Shortbread? Tea & Toast?

Your choice but make sure that you attend!!!

Presentation of Certificates

Member Profiles

Christmas Trivia

See you soon!



Dynamic Women Can Make a Difference