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When one gets near the end of yet another year, one tends to think back to review and to assess what this passage of time brought as the months passed.

For me, with wars, hardships and disasters taking place in so many parts of the world, and dominating the news, I am thinking of my many blessings. First and foremost, I feel so blessed to live in this beautiful country called Canada and appreciate how fortunate my family and I are that Canada accepted us as new citizens nearly 50 years ago, enabling us to have peaceful, bountiful and productive lives.

As I write this message, I realize how blessed I am to have this amazing club named CFUW Brantford in my life. It has enriched me through intellectual and social stimulation plus the opportunity to get to know so many amazing women, who each bring interesting and accomplished backgrounds. The club also engenders a sense of community – one of sharing our strengths, our generosity, of friendships and of reaching out to help one another in times of need.

The club also reaches out to outsiders in need and members have been particularly generous this year. Trivia Night in February raised a record amount of \$3,232 for the Scholarship Fund. These funds have enabled us to provide scholarships to four very worthy candidates this year. Member donations to the Nova Vita “Hope for the Holidays” fundraiser have amassed more than \$3,000, some \$1,200 more than last year. And, of course, at the October meeting, we voted to donate that portion of our annual dues that are allocated for international endeavours to the four worthy organizations outlined in the last newsletter.

We members are blessed. Our general meetings bring us together to hear amazing speakers. Meetings are very well-attended and they also give the added opportunity to socialize. A shout out to the Program and Social committees! We have over a dozen interest groups - biking, walking, games, world awareness, bridge, golf, three book clubs and three groups involving food and day trippers. In other words, something for everyone and a shout out must go to the leaders of all these groups who keep them running effectively.

Huge thanks also to the Executive team who ensure the smooth operation of the club, and particularly to those who stepped up to take on a President of the Month position. Another shout out must go to Sandra Hughes, Marsha Skrypuch and Mary Pitchford who are responsible for our effective communications through the newsletter, website and Facebook page, and to Anne Martin who initiated and runs our hybrid meeting system.

As can be seen, keeping a club such as ours running, demands the time and expertise of many members. Thus, it is not surprising that there is a demand by CFUW clubs for simplification. In response, National is now focusing on developing easier, more user- friendly tools for clubs, as members request everything from one page constitutions, simpler meeting formats and flexible leadership models.

We are really blessed to be such a forward looking club. Some time ago, we instituted leadership sharing with our President of the month system and shared Secretary and Past President positions. Furthermore, we received a request from CFUW White Rock BC requesting information about our model for managing our club. CFUW National and Ontario Council sent our New Members Handbook to clubs across Canada as a prototype, highlighting the newsy, informal tone as well as the professional format. Furthermore, we have had a few clubs approach us with questions ranging from how to run hybrid meetings, to how to implement our shared leadership structure.

A final shout out to Leslie Leach who has offered to host our Christmas gathering on December 13, and to Maria Timmons who will do double duty in December and January as President of the Month.

On behalf of the Executive Team, I wish you all a safe and happy holiday season with many blessings and the making of special memories to treasure in years to come.

*Janet Kempster
President for November*



Volunteer Needed – No Heaving Lifting Required

As many of you know I will be out of commission for the first few months of 2024. One of my tasks as President -in – Name is to attend the Regional Presidents’ Meetings, which take place every other month, on the fourth Thursday, via Zoom. The next two meetings are scheduled to take place on January 25, 2024 and March 28, 2024 @ 7 pm. This is a great opportunity to learn about what is happening with the other clubs in our region. If you are interested, please contact me at capitano2804@gmail.com.

Betsy C.

CFUW Brantford is Causing a Stir

I just wanted to let all you lovely ladies know there has been a great deal of interest in our unique leadership model. Both Lin and I have had discussion with other clubs who are interested in our leadership model. Many clubs are struggling with filling leadership positions. They have members who would like to contribute to their respective clubs, but are not in a position to take on work intensive positions, in particular the position of president or vice president. I know that sounds familiar. CFUW Brantford is not unique in the challenges we have faced in filling leadership positions, but we have found a unique solution that is of interest to other clubs.

Respectfully Submitted

Betsy C.

New Members Handbook a Hit

Kudos to those who were involved in the creation of the New Members Handbook. This Handbook is an amazing resource for all members of CFUW. CFUW National was so impressed with the Handbook it sent a copy to each club president in the country. Congratulations to Anne M., Barb S., Maria T., Carol K., Joan H., Marsha S., and Lin F. for putting together an amazing document.

CFUW clubs across Canada share their best practices

The Leadership Team thought you might be interested seeing an excerpt from the email we sent to CFUW White Rock, BC who contacted us to explore our leadership model as a result of seeing our New Members’ Handbook.

Excerpt from e-mail to CFUW White Rock:

“Our club has 78 members, mostly seniors, mostly not interested in doing a big job, but very invested in the club and willing to do their bit to keep the club vital and enjoyable. We have found that many hands make light work. No one wanted to take on all the duties of the President, but six of us were prepared to step in and manage meetings and the monthly ‘Executive Task List’ for one month or even two. Our objective as the Leadership Team is to identify what key items need to be done each month - from paying dues to setting up ad hoc committees to investigate key initiatives. This allows us to keep the business portion of our monthly General Meetings short and efficient. Our members appreciate that we bring items to them that have already been worked on, so that they are free to discuss the recommendation, add to it and then vote on it as a motion. We have found that it is important to keep Minutes with a bit more info in them than just recording Motions. This allows us to keep our leadership team informed on what is going on should they be out of town or otherwise enjoying life beyond CFUW. We also store our Club’s files - Agenda, Minutes, Program lists, Membership lists etc in Dropbox - an electronic storage system. This allows all the Executive to refer to any documents or info that they need. Each file has a person responsible for making additions or changes - for example, the Scholarship Chair and the Treasurer would be the only ones who could change information in the Scholarship file. It has helped to have a point person who knows Dropbox as many of us are not tech-savvy and appreciate that there is someone who can help us load files.

Our Executive Monthly Task List is a list of actions and decisions that need to take place each month. We support one another in ensuring that these items are on our monthly Executive Meeting Agenda along with items arising from the General Meeting or previous Executive meetings.

This year, the Chairs of Advocacy, Communications, Interest Groups, Membership, Program, Scholarship and Social are all chaired by one person. In the past some of these jobs have also been shared.

In 2023-24 a few of us should be cycling off the Executive, and we are hoping that our Nominations process in Feb/March will bring in a few other pairs of hands to share the work in 2024-25.

One critical component for success is to create a safe and collaborative climate so that members feel comfortable participating in the leadership model. They need to know that mistakes happen, that we are there for one another to help sort the problem out. Our motto is not that we will always be right - but that we will work to get it right.

According to CFUW National, many clubs are struggling to find an effective leadership model that will take us into the future. and so far, we have had success with this model.”

Lin F.

THANK YOU, CFUW BRANTFORD!

On December 6th, our Club presented Nova Vita with **\$3,000.00** for their **2023 Hope for the Holidays campaign**. Serving Brantford and the County of Brant for over 40 years, Nova Vita provides trauma-informed emergency shelter, outreach support, and counselling services to individuals and families experiencing abuse, as well as counselling for individuals who have caused harm in their relationships. Throughout these four decades, CFUW Brantford has supported Nova Vita with sponsorships, volunteering, and initiatives such as Basketeers, International Women's Day events, and annual events.

Hope for the Holidays was introduced in December 2020 in response to the Pandemic and the alarming escalation of domestic violence.

To date, over the four **Hope for the Holiday** campaigns from 2020 to date, we have raised **\$9,235.00** to help Nova Vita make a difference for women and families who are in Nova Vita's care during the Holiday season.



NOVA VITA
Help • Hope • Heal



CFUW National Resolution Intents:

The following are Resolution Intents for the year 2024 and they are as follows:

Resolution #1 (Advocacy Standing Committee): Archiving Select CFUW Adopted Resolutions I

Resolution #2 (Advocacy Standing Committee): Archiving Select CFUW Adopted Resolutions II

Resolution #3 (Advocacy Standing Committee): Archiving CFUW Adopted Resolutions Identified for Combining

Resolution #4 (Advocacy Standing Committee): Combined CFUW Adopted Resolutions

Resolution #5 (CFUW North Delta/Surrey): Restore and Preserve Peatlands in Canada

Resolution #6 (CFUW Georgetown): National Database for Documenting the Impact of Drinking Water on Indigenous Communities

Resolution #7 (CFUW Nanaimo): Preserving Deep Sea Ecosystems

Resolution #8 (Long Term Care and Seniors' Rights Study Group): Federal Resources to Enable Equity for all Canadians to Age in Place

Resolution #9 (Long Term Care and Seniors' Rights Study Group): Federal Incentives to Implement the Health Standards Organization 2023 Long Term Care Standards

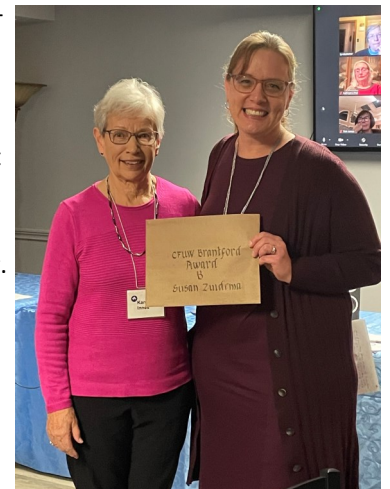
Resolution #10 is currently being modified and will be included in the next CFUW National Newsletter

Scholarship



The successful candidate for the 2023 Scholarship Award B is Susan Zuidema.

Susan has worked for several years in Brantford with people who are struggling with poverty, homelessness, addiction, and mental health. We know that Susan has seen first hand their trauma and feelings of hopelessness. A genuine advocate for the disenfranchised, Susan has been instrumental in mobilizing food programs, increasing temporary shelter beds, and establishing Charlie's Place for young men and also housing for young mothers in need of mentorship. As the former executive director of "Why Not" mission, Susan helped many at risk young people. Susan believes that a trusted psychotherapist is a crucial component of healing and hope. She has enrolled in the M. of Div. clinical counseling three year program at Tynedale Seminary in Toronto. She know that Susan will put our award to good use for our community. Karen I.



November General Meeting Spotlight

The CFUW Brantford General Meeting Program on November 22, 2023 featured the great grandson of Joseph Brant, the Honourable Justice Gethin Edward. Since he was appointed to the Ontario Court of Justice, Justice Edward has taken on complex projects such as the founding of the Indigenous Persons Court of Brantford, sometimes called the Gladue Court. He spoke to us about the issues around the original land grant of the Haldimand Tract, such as sovereignty, that will be examined in an upcoming court case.

Karen I., chair of the Scholarship Committee, introduced the amazing winner of the Award B Scholarship, Susan Zuidema. Susan has made many contributions to our community and looks forward to continuing her education to help further efforts.



Member Spotlight

We are pleased to share some exciting news about one of our members, Marsha Skrypuch.

Congratulations

to Marsha S., member and author, is shortlisted for the 2024 Kobzar Book Award for her recent book Winterkill. *The \$25,000 KOBZAR™ Book Award recognizes outstanding contributions to Canadian literary arts by authors who write on a topic with a tangible connection to Ukrainian Canadians...This year's KOBZAR Book Award entries showcase titles which highlight issues that impact Ukrainians as a people in Canada. —Kobzar Book Award*

The winner will be announced on March 21, 2024.



Shortlist

2024 Kobzar Book Award

MARSHA SKRYPUCH



CMD | Cooke
McDermid

Interest Groups

Creative Cookery:

We now have two groups meeting on Wednesdays. One group met at the home of Natalie P. to have a Newfoundland themed dinner. We had fun kissing the cod, sharing the delicious food we had prepared while we shared news and ideas.



Monday Evening Book Club:

The Monday Book Club selection for November was the graphic novel, **Ducks, 2 years in the Tar Sands** by Kate Beaton. This Canadian comics artist wrote the first graphic novel to win Canada Reads.

The author portrayed a powerful message illustrating the themes of environmental destruction,

loneliness and lack of mental health resources, misogyny, labor exploitation and corporate greed, and the detrimental effect on the local indigenous communities.

The group were glad to be exposed to this literary style, which is popular among the youth of today, but most prefer to read a book in text rather than through graphic images.

Dian K.

Thursday Book Club: Valley of the Birdtail written by Andrew Stobo Sniderman & Douglas Sanderson. Andrew is a lawyer, writer and once a student of Douglas. Douglas is a law professor at Uof T and a Swampy Cree.

This book follows multiple generations of two families, one indigenous and one white.

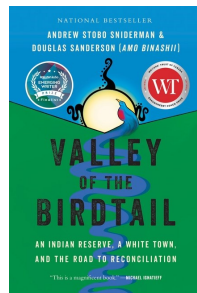
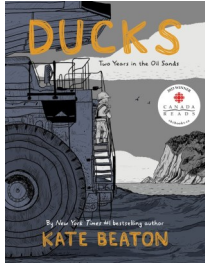
Valley of the Birdtail is a true story of racial injustice, residential schools and a path forward.

The book reflects what went wrong between indigenous and non-indigenous and the role of the Indian Act (still in effect up to 2022).

The authors give an amazing historical look at indigenous people in Canada and government failures, perceptions and racism. But they also outline a way forward to fix, heal and learn how to reconcile with a new perception.

One comment - every high school student should be required to read this book. Very well received by the book club members.

Hazel R.



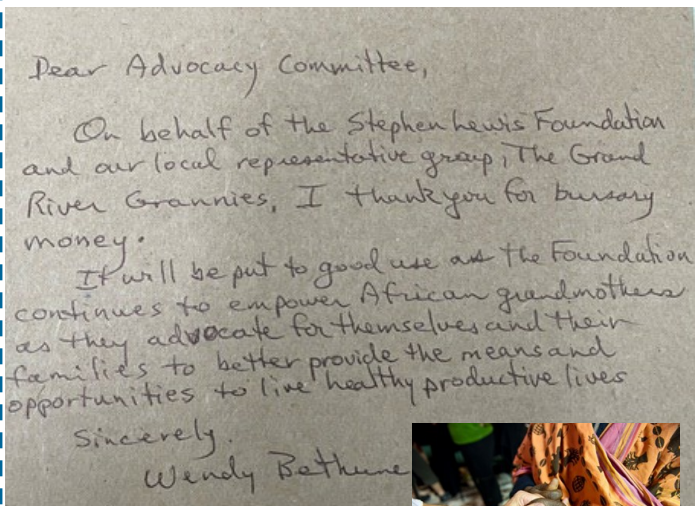
Dining Out:



Twenty members gathered at Speakezzies Café for an excellent meal and social time.



Walking Group: November walking went from sunny and bright to gray and cold, but our walkers enjoyed the time in nature.



Thank you from the Grand River Grannies



2023 –2024 EXECUTIVE

PRESIDENT IN NAME:

- Elizabeth Capitano

PAST PRESIDENT:

- Lin Fines and Janet Kempster

ROTATING PRESIDENTIAL TEAM:

- Elizabeth Capitano—June, July, August, May
- Lin Fines— March and April
- Anne Martin—October
- Janet Kempster—November
- Maria Timmons—December, January
- Catherine Sawyer— September, February

SECRETARY:

Lin Fines/Penelope Jeffery

TREASURER: Maria Timmons

STANDING COMMITTEE CHAIRS:

- Advocacy:** Patti Kunashko
- Communications:** Sandra Hughes
- Interest Groups:** Roma Makkreel
- Membership:** Barb Scott
- Program:** Collette Wilson
- Scholarship:** Karen Innes
- Social:** Bev Golden



Holiday Party on Wednesday, December 13th

From 5:30 PM to 8:30 PM

A very special thanks to Leslie L., who has graciously agreed to host this year's Holiday Party in her home at 239 Dufferin Ave, Brantford. This is a **potluck party of finger foods** since we will be walking about, and won't want to be balancing cutlery! Please bring your choice of appetizer or dessert plated with serving utensil, ready to be served. If your last name starts with A-L, bring an appetizer, and M-Z a dessert, but feel free to choose.... just let Leslie know what you are bringing. Also, please BYOB or arrange to split a bottle... or bring your favourite Christmas beverage. Leslie will have some non-alcohol drinks available. **AND** - if you like - feel free to wear your **favourite Christmas sweater** or - as they say in the UK - your **ugly holiday jumper!** Please RSVP to Leslie lleach595@gmail.com by December 6th, including what you will be bringing to the potluck.. Please car pool to save congestion on the street. If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact Bev G. or Leslie L.

Susan Gamble, Our January General Meeting Speaker

Susan Gamble's long career in journalism began in 1979 at the Brant News. She went on to become one of the first female television news photographers, working with her husband at CKCO-TV in Kitchener, travelling around Ontario capturing events on her wind-up Bell and Howell camera at first, and later on video, for the evening news. In 1980, Susan began writing for the Brantford Expositor. Her columns were heart-warming, informative and often amusing, and had a loyal readership. Eventually, Susan took on the role of investigative reporter, winning several Ontario Newspaper Awards, and a nomination for a Canadian Newspaper Association Award. Susan will talk to us about her career in journalism, her Expositor column, as well as her work as a court reporter. Susan will also inform us how to be more discerning consumers of news in the age of disinformation. Susan will join us on Zoom on January 24, 2024.



Wednesday, Feb. 7, 2024, 7:30 pm

Maximum of 30 teams!!

DUNSDON LEGION

9 Toll Gate Road, Brantford

\$100/team of four - \$15 charitable receipt per person

Invite friends, relatives, co-workers!!

FOOD!! PRIZES!! FUN!!

Proceeds to our Scholarship Fund

It's not too early to form a team!!!



Our condolences to Penelope J. on the passing of her loving and devoted mother.

All the best in their healing journey to Kathy B, Nora F, Jean L and Lee Ann C.

cfuw  fcfdu



Dynamic Women Can Make a Difference