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Realizing potential. For all women.

cfuw GUELPH

The Guelph Line

November 2025

Water Street Church
287 Water Street, Guelph ON

Business Meeting	**7:00 - 7:45** p.m.
Speaker & Wrap-Up	**8:00 - 9:15** p.m.

General Meetings will be held in Hybrid format, both in person and on Zoom; the Zoom link will be e-mailed to members the day before each meeting.

If you are able, please come to the meeting. If you need a ride, please contact communicationscfuwguelph@gmail.com



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November General Meeting: Tuesday November 25, 2025

Marion Reidel, Writer, Teacher, Volunteer

Stories from the Royal City Mission



In her own words, Guelph author, Marion Reidel took up writing '*after centuries teaching Canada's youth*.' Her stories have won awards and local acclaim. She regularly performs at Open Mic nights because she craves attention and loves to make people laugh!

When Reidel first asked a group of people experiencing homelessness if she could document their story, she thought they would tell her to mind her own business. Instead she said most were thankful someone cared and they opened up about their past and current struggles. Marion Reidel is one of the volunteers at The Royal City Mission in Guelph. She's been so inspired by the community around it, that she wrote a book: ***Stories from the Mission*.**

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

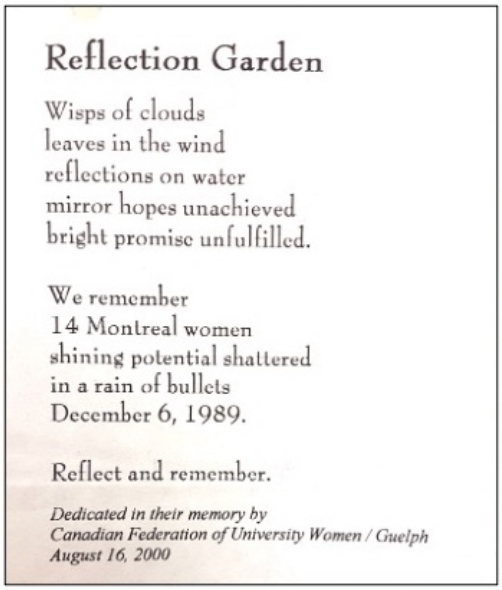


November: Its darker days bring a quiet, sombre, reflective feel. I'm in no rush to dismiss this feeling, content to sit with it for a while before the bustle of the festive holiday season. For me it's a time to contemplate the passage of time. Its chill instills empathy, for it's a time when the realities of homelessness and food insecurity in our community come into sharper focus. And as December 6 **National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women** approaches, it is a time to mourn victims of gender-based violence.

It may seem bleak to sit with all this, but I won't drown in it. If there's anything 80 years of CFUW Guelph can teach me, it's that so much of what we do within our club and beyond makes a difference. Actions are the antidote to feeling overwhelmed.

Our Advocacy group gives us clear guidance on actions we may take. We have club members who are generous with their time and with funding our community partners, scholarships and bursaries. Our program committee ensures that we have engaging speakers at monthly meetings

who inform and educate us on a wide range of topics. All of these contributions make the days a little lighter.





When we celebrate our 80th anniversary, while we recognize our club's contributions to this great city, we also recognize what underpins our successes – the friendships and support for each other and other women in our community that are fostered in our club.

I think you would agree -- In the dreary days of November, spending time with interest group friends feels like a big warm hug.

If you haven't yet done so, I invite you to read the message from Sandra Shaw, CFUW Ontario Council President in the latest Ontario Council Newsletter. Her words illuminate the importance of female friendships for our overall well-being.

https://myemail.constantcontact.com/CFUW-Ontario-Council-News-November-2025.html?soid=1107531849301&aid=U8daElywVrQ
~ *Gwen Revington*

PS: Do people tell you that you have a great radio voice? Would you like to be part of a team to participate in a podcast? Podcast host and creator Jordan Sloggett is interested in creating an episode about CFUW Guelph. Check out the *Growing Guelph* podcast on Spotify. Contact Gwen Revington if you are interested in this opportunity.

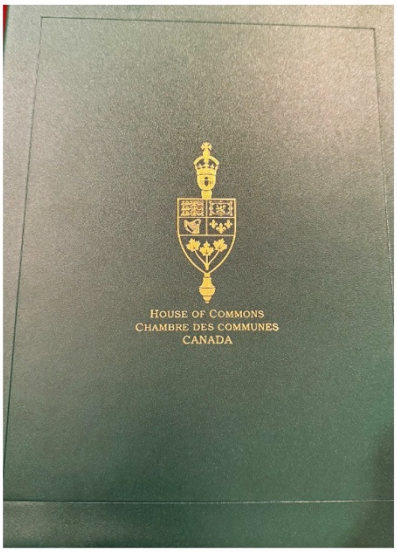
PPS: A CFUW member from St John's NL moving to Guelph in January, 2026, is seeking childcare for a 33 month old child, and has run into waiting lists. If you have any suggestions, let me (Gwen) know and I will pass on the info. She is also seeking a place to rent for her and her child in the south end.

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CFUW Guelph 80th Anniversary Celebration

As part of the December 2 celebration, we will be putting together a photo presentation that members and guests can watch before the meeting starts and during lunch. If you have photos from the 50th, 60th or 70th Anniversary celebrations or any relatively recent interest group activities, please forward them to: hbailey@uoguelph.ca
There is no need to identify individual people, but noting which celebration or Interest group the photo is of would be helpful.

Recently a group from CFUW attended the *Municipal Campaign School Launch* at Harcourt Church. Guelph MP Dominique O'Rourke presented some members of our CFUW Executive with an 80th Anniversary Citation from the House of Commons.







Presentation of the 80th Anniversary Citation (l to r): Gwen Revington, Dominique O'Rourke, Deb Thompson, and Heather Bailey.

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EXECUTIVE REPORTS

ADVOCACY



MP Meetings, New Members, Campaign School, Proposed Resolution and the 16 Days of Activism

The Advocacy Committee has had a busy and productive fall engaging with MPs on key issues, submitting a resolution proposal, welcoming new members and preparing for the *16 Days of Activism* with our community partners.

After our June 27th meeting with Mike Schreiner, MPP, the months of September and October saw committee members meeting with Dominique O'Rourke, MP and Michael Chong, MP to discuss our three key advocacy priorities: **Basic Income, Gender-Based Violence and Disinformation.** These topics have guided all our recent discussions with government representatives.



L to R: Deb Thompson, Michael Chong (MP, Wellington-Halton Hills North), Andrea Horton, Liz Fisk

All leaders listened closely and expressed interest in our concerns. They shared ideas and suggestions on how to address these important issues, reinforcing the value of respectful dialogue and the importance of continued community advocacy.

Our Focus Areas
This term, CFUW Guelph's advocacy is focused on **Basic Income**, **Gender-Based Violence** and **Disinformation**, issues that are closely linked to other urgent concerns. We continue to listen to the voices of our members on many other important issues, including **housing**, **climate** and **healthcare**, which we expect to explore in future terms. By narrowing our focus to only three key topics each term, we can engage more effectively with government leaders and deepen our understanding of how to support efforts to address these challenges.

We are delighted to welcome three new Advocacy Committee members, **Heather Beecroft** and new Club members **Lyn McLeod** and **Jennifer Mackenzie**. Their insight and enthusiasm will be wonderful additions to our group.

The Advocacy Committee has formed a working group, **Andrea Horton, Kate Ciceri and Liz Fisk,** to prepare and submit an intent to develop a **CFUW Guelph Resolution on the Destructive Impact of Disinformation**, examining how it undermines democracy, public trust and equality. The intent was submitted on **October 23**. Also, see Kate's second report on *Disinformation* (below).

Looking ahead, **CFUW Guelph** will take part in the **16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence** from **November 25** to **December 10**. This international campaign calls for the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls.

For more information and ideas on how to take action during the 16 Days of Activism, please visit CFUW National's page on gender-based violence:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1YtyaIDFAEJR7WcKV6arsAd9-wrRynjzI

Stay tuned for details about local events being planned with our community partners.

We welcome members to join us at our monthly **Advocacy Committee meetings**, held on the **second Thursday of each month at 1:00 p.m.** We recognize that not all members are available to meet in the afternoon and are exploring ways to ensure everyone interested in advocacy can contribute whether they can attend meetings during a weekday or not.

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Disinformation Part 2 *Kate Ciceri, Advocacy*
In order to understand both the process and power of disinformation, it is essential to understand the concept of '*Otherization*'. The process of 'othering' is categorizing people by ethnicity, belief systems, skin colour, religion, gender, and sexual orientation. It creates the belief of others as inferior and a threat – Us *vs* Them. It is a process that uses differences to destroy a sense of similarity and human connection. It sets the stage for prejudice and discrimination. It manipulates and creates political persecution. It reduces or displaces empathy-creating extremist positions. The other group becomes the enemy – less than human and thus deserving of attack and destruction.

Research data from anthropological psychologists suggests that the evolutionary brain is wired to categorize. Early humans existing within small tribal groupings faced constant threats to survival. It was easier and safer to be suspicious of others. Humans became quick to attribute negative stereotypes to 'out' groups. This negative stereotype can even influence empathy – the essence of human goodness – to turn against human connection. 'Otherization' can intensify the empathy within the preferred group leading to violence against the 'other' seen as a threat. Disinformation is a powerful force that feeds seeds of hate and fear. It leads to moral disengagement, creating a psychological distance from the suffering of the 'out' group. It leads to 'in' group favouritism and 'out' group dehumanization. It underscores our terrible history of atrocious crimes to humanity.
See: https://www.un.org/en/hate-speech/understanding-hate-speech/hate-speech-and-real-harm

'Otherization' acts as a malign force within our society, fueled by disinformation. We are not exempt from its influence. Our awareness of this threat and our individual determination to use our voice-no matter how quiet-is an active and effective tool. It is helpful to remind ourselves of our own power in these challenging times.
Please contact Kate for more information: katecic@icloud.com

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Ways to Be Involved in Advocacy
To make participation easier, members can:

- **Attend in-person weekend committee meetings.** While our regular meetings are held during a weekday, we could consider organizing a weekend meeting or two during the term to make it easier for more members to attend in person at least a couple of times.
- **Receive meeting notes and updates by email.**
- **Share ideas or feedback between meetings.**
- **Help with specific projects, research or outreach** that can be done independently.

Your ideas and participation are always appreciated.
On behalf of the CFUW Guelph Advocacy Committee: Heather Beecroft, Kate Ciceri, Liz Fisk, Penny Hendricks, Andrea Horton, Mary McEwen, Lyn McLeod, Jennifer Mackenzie, Kim Palazzo, Lydia Thomas

Submitted by Deb Thompson,
Advocacy Chair

HOSPITALITY
Ticket sales have now ended for our 80th Anniversary Luncheon to be held Tuesday December 2 at Springfield Golf & Country Club, **and we are happy to say it is a sold-out event!**

For those attending, note that **doors will open at 11:00 am** to allow time for to get a beverage, pick upi your name tag and socialize before our program begins.

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COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

The recipient of our CFUW Guelph's one-time funding for 2025-26 is the Salvation Army. The funds will go towards the purchase of much needed personal items for women and children. Lydia Thomas (our liaison with the Salvation Army) arranged for a tour of their dynamic services centre on Victoria Road, along with the cheque presentation.



L to R: Gwen Revington, Lydia Thomas, Major Peter Van Duinen and Ashlee Mackneer (both of the Salvation Army), Heather Bailey

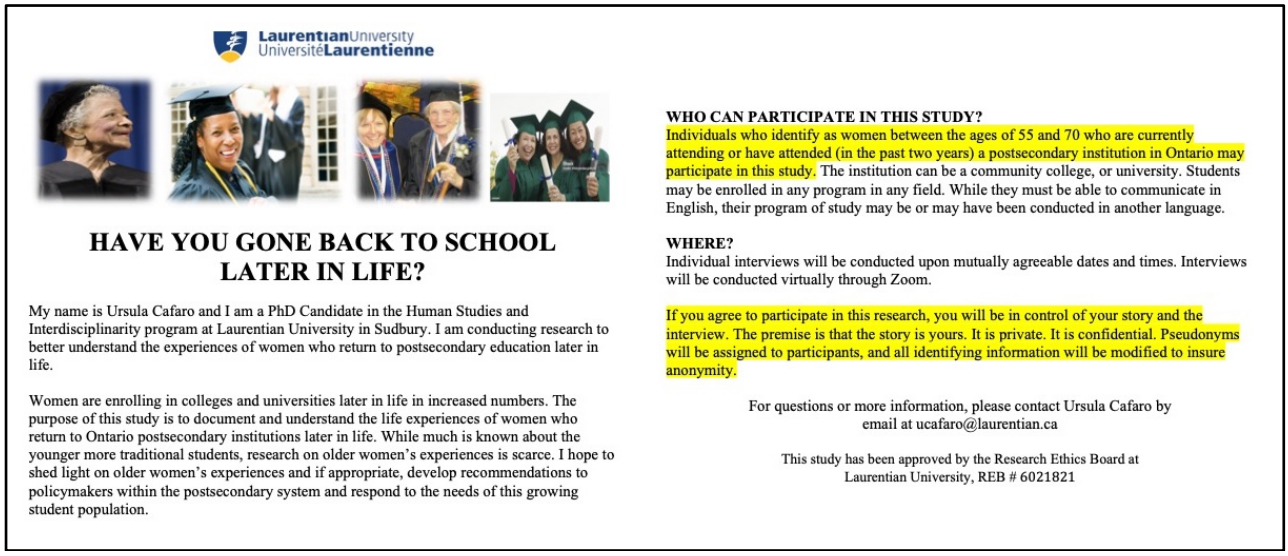
TREASURER

CFUW Guelph Budget	**Budget 2025-26**	**Actual to Nov 10, 2025**
Revenue		
Membership (net of dues)	4650.00	**4,492.50**
Banquet		**-190.40**
Interest	500.00	2.80
Total	**5150.00**	**4,304.90**
Expenses		
Nat'l and Prov'l meetings	500.00	
Hall Rental/Zoom expenses	1500.00	496.80
Hospitality	200.00	
Member Services	300.00	257.31
Online banking fees	180.00	90
Program	1200.00	300.00
Communication, PR and Website	300.00	556.21
Advocacy	500.00	200.00
Total	**4680.00**	**1,900.32**
Surplus or Deficit	**470.00**	**2,404.58**

Submitted by Heather Bailey, Treasurer

MEMBER SERVICES
Executive members will be hosting a new member's dessert party the evening of January 8, 2026. New members are welcome to meet other new members and learn more about our club. An emailed invitation will follow soon.
Submitted by Barbara Kuczynski, Member Services

CLUB NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS



LaurentianUniversity
UniversitéLaurentienne

HAVE YOU GONE BACK TO SCHOOL LATER IN LIFE?

My name is Ursula Cafaro and I am a PhD Candidate in the Human Studies and Interdisciplinarity program at Laurentian University in Sudbury. I am conducting research to better understand the experiences of women who return to postsecondary education later in life.

Women are enrolling in colleges and universities later in life in increased numbers. The purpose of this study is to document and understand the life experiences of women who return to Ontario postsecondary institutions later in life. While much is known about the younger more traditional students, research on older women's experiences is scarce. I hope to shed light on older women's experiences and if appropriate, develop recommendations to policymakers within the postsecondary system and respond to the needs of this growing student population.

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY?
Individuals who identify as women between the ages of 55 and 70 who are currently attending or have attended (in the past two years) a postsecondary institution in Ontario may participate in this study. The institution can be a community college, or university. Students may be enrolled in any program in any field. While they must be able to communicate in English, their program of study may be or may have been conducted in another language.

WHERE?
Individual interviews will be conducted upon mutually agreeable dates and times. Interviews will be conducted virtually through Zoom.

If you agree to participate in this research, you will be in control of your story and the interview. The premise is that the story is yours. It is private. It is confidential. Pseudonyms will be assigned to participants, and all identifying information will be modified to insure anonymity.

For questions or more information, please contact Ursula Cafaro by email at ucafaro@laurentian.ca

This study has been approved by the Research Ethics Board at Laurentian University, REB # 6021821

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Regarding Dr. Emma Allen-Vercoe's Power Point Presentation at the October 28 General Meeting: Following her presentation, several members asked Dr. Allen-Vercoe for a copy of her slides. Dr. Allen-Vercoe has given permission to CFUW Guelph to distribute the slides and you can email Gabriella Facchini gfpc@sympatico.ca for a copy. Once you receive the slides, Dr. Allen-Vercoe requests the following:

1. These slides cannot be posted on any website, distributed via any social media or otherwise electronically shared with anyone.
2. By requesting a copy of the slides, the CFUW Guelph member agrees to abide by these conditions.

Also, a recent article in Guelph Today discusses the documentary she mentioned in her talk: https://www.guelphtoday.com/bold/u-of-g-students-documentary-bridges-two-worlds-to-connect-his-family-11483265

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CFUW Guelph Member **Susan Brown** has published an epistolary narrative of the letters of her father, Charlie, and mother, Greta, during WWII. Our members may be interested in a recent write-up about it in Guelph Today: https://www.guelphtoday.com/journeys/letters-of-longing-sharing-a-guelph-couples-love-story-during-wwii-11448292

The book can be ordered from her website: loveandwar.ca

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Chalmers Christmas Gift Bag Campaign
If you wish to donate a Gift Bag, you may **bring it to our November 25 General Meeting**. We'll provide a basket for collection, and we'll deliver the bags to Chalmers Centre in time for their Gift Bag distribution.

The following is from Chalmers:
"Each year we hear from our guests how grateful they are to receive this gift and that, for many, it is the only gift they receive. You are truly making a difference in their lives."

We ask that you include new, good quality items in their original packages. We ask that each gift bag contain the following:

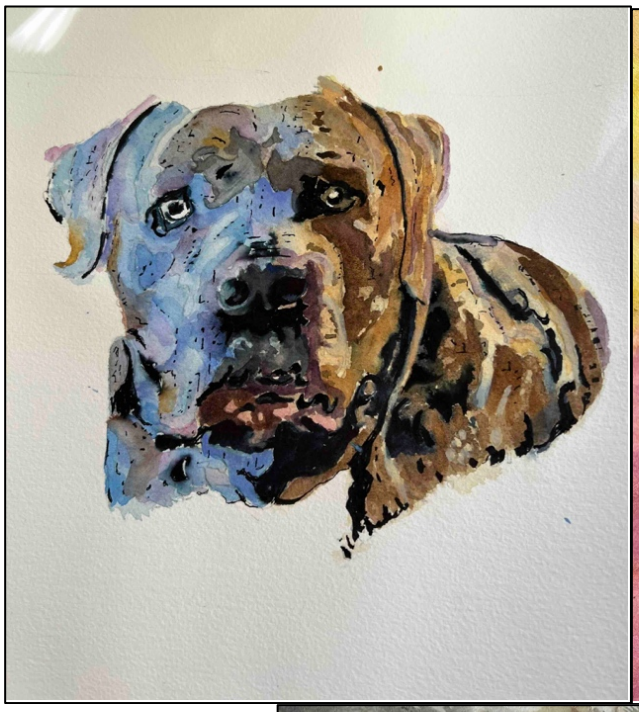
- Regular size shampoo
- Toothpaste and dental floss
- Single toothbrush in its packaging
- Soap, shower gel or body wash
- Deodorant
- Shaving cream
- Package of 5-10 disposable razors
- Small box of kleenex
- Box of maxi pads
- Boxed candy or boxed chocolate (not homemade and not halloween candy)
- Small jar of instant coffee or tin/box of hot chocolate (not coffee pods)
- A jar of peanut butter
- One pair of warm gloves (gender-neutral)
- ~~One pair of thick socks (gender-neutral)~~ **socks no longer needed thanks to a generous donor!**

Please note that there is no need for the items to be gift wrapped. Christmas Gift Bags can be delivered in new, reusable shopping bags. If you prefer to donate the funds to purchase the items for a bag, click on this link.

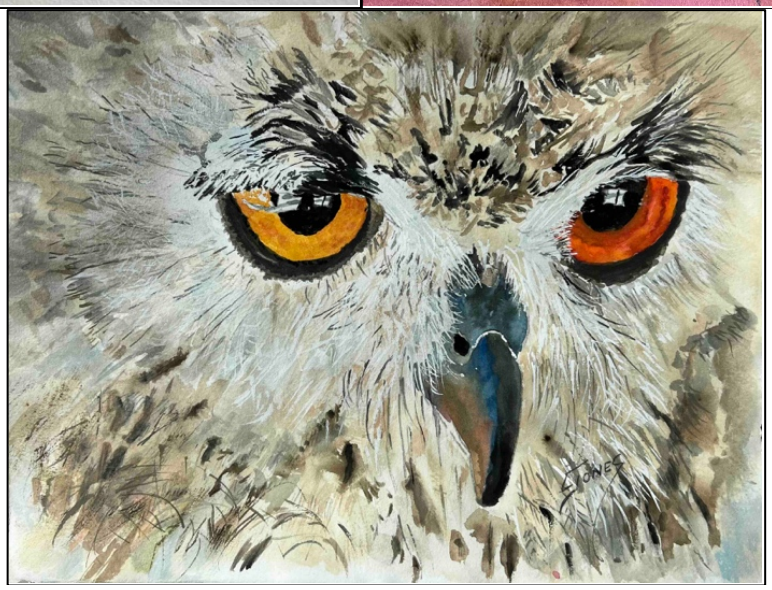


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New CFUW Guelph member *Carolyn Jones* will be exhibiting her watercolour paintings from December 1 until December 31st at the **Westminster Branch of the Guelph Public Library**. She welcomes members as well as their friends and family to visit the showing.







Carolyn is a new resident of Guelph but has exhibited extensively in her previous location. This will be her first exhibit in the Guelph area.

If you have any questions, please contact Carolyn directly at 819-437-9980.

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INTEREST GROUP ACTIVITIES

ARTS TOURING GROUP

Our September Arts Touring Group meeting was highly successful. We viewed a presentation on the topic of "Colour". Over refreshments, we generated ideas for future arts tours and at-home topics, consequently, we have a rich programme outlined for the year ahead.



In October we visited **The Homer Watson Gallery** to see a fibre art exhibition entitled "Blue" (see photo above). The range of blue tones and shades evident in the art works was thrilling. In November we plan to tour the **Paul Morin Gallery** in Alton and the **Alton Mill Studios**. Ways of enjoying and sharing art are innumerable. We invite fresh ideas and always welcome new members.

Submitted by Maureen Busby-O'Connor, Convenor, Clare Irwin, Connie Valeriote

CYCLING



Burlington Waterfront Trail

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Admiring Barb Hale's dahlias



Checking out Langdon Hall!

Submitted by Terri Belyea

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EXPLORING MUSIC

The Exploring Music group currently has 2 spare places. We meet every first Friday morning at 10:00 am to hear a variety of presentations about music given by our members or by an outside speaker. We are currently focussing on *Singing and Singers*. We also occasionally arrange for groups to attend concerts or shows.

For more information, please contact Margaret Hull: mehull@rogers.com

HIKING



Hiking in Limehouse Conservation Area (l to r): Sonia Spekkens, Carol Herrmann, Heather Beecroft & Diane Boyd

SCRABBLE

If you enjoy a social game of Scrabble with **a bit** of friendly competition, the 2nd Thursday Scrabble group is looking for additional members. We meet in the afternoon at member's houses, so if you are interested, please contact Brenda Coomber: bcoomber@uoguelph.ca

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MEET A MEMBER! Contributed by Melodie Wynne

Barbara Kuczynski



Barbara Kuczynski (née Karczewski) was born to Polish parents and has a younger sister, Irene. The family lived within the Polish community in Toronto. Both parents worked to support the family. She loved the neighbourhood, had many friends and said she could "*play all day outside*!" The need for a larger house took the family to North York when Barbara was 16 but she missed the ambiance of her old community.

Barbara attended a local Catholic school to Grade 8, skipping a year, then went to two different high schools. From family members, she acquired a love of good, unprocessed food and "scratch" baking.

Barbara then attended the University of Toronto, commuting from the family home. "*My bedroom was my escape, my refuge, and I enjoyed decorating it as I pleased.*" This reflects her developing interest in interior design. She graduated in 1973 with an Honors B.A., having taken a range of courses, including French, science and psychology. She met Leon through mutual friends; he was majoring in psychology. They enjoyed many "study-dates" at the St. Michael's College Library and while discovering many interesting ethnic student restaurants in the Toronto Annex.

In 1973, and while Leon was doing an M.Sc., Barbara attended Toronto Teacher's College; they married at the end of 1974. She taught for five years while Leon obtained a Ph.D. in psychology. In general, she liked teaching and lesson planning for younger children (Grades 2 - 5), especially teaching them art. She loved kid's books and would have liked to have become a Teacher Librarian. Leon then accepted a Post-Doctoral position in Washington, D.C. They sold their house in Toronto, packed up all of their belongings, "drugged the cat", found a nice two bedroom apartment in the Washington area and moved. For the next six years, they lived in D.C. with the welcoming status of 'non-resident, foreign alien'.

Barbara wanted to work, and after obtaining permission from U.S. Immigration, was accepted into a "temporary stream", doing temporary, and quite varied and interesting placements, including working in the Capital Hill libraries of prominent law firms. She became pregnant and their first daughter, Eva, was born in 1982; daughter, Lizzie, was born in 1985. Washington was a fascinating city filled with history and interesting neighborhoods. They rented a townhouse and enjoyed a vibrant social life through her husband's friends and colleagues.

The downtown Washington setting offered variety; they enjoyed the local cultural scene (music, museums, *etc.*). The ocean was only two hours away and the Blue Ridge Mountains an hour

away. "*I took courses/workshops such as spelunking (aka 'caving') and - smile here: 'How to get oneself invited to Embassy parties'*!" They forever expanded their culinary experience by discovering American regional cuisine, BBQ culture and southern style seafood. Clearly, Washington offered a very different urban lifestyle from Guelph's. In 1985, Leon accepted a position at the University of Guelph. They moved to Guelph and found a house in the University Village Neighbourhood. Barbara loved its "small-town" vibe and community feel.

When her eldest daughter was in school and youngest in day care, Barbara went back to work part time. The first position which covered a maternity leave involved supervising U of G students in placements with special needs kids in Guelph classrooms. She enjoyed being back in a classroom setting so this led to a variety of positions such as substitute teacher, and educational assistant with Grade 2 students. These positions were often part time or flexible, so Barbara was able to juggle other opportunities such as doing database work for the Guelph Arts Council, being a research assistant for various U of G psychology studies involving children, and working in a bookstore and a fancy kitchen store.

During that time, she took 2 of the 3 Ministry of Education Teacher Librarian courses but with budget cuts, that route, unfortunately, did not work out. In 1995, Barbara took a career path in a new direction and worked in real estate. She loved all the learning opportunities in that profession as well as working with such a variety of people. After 5 years, she went back to working as a substitute teacher and later full time as a research assistant on a major Psychology Department project involving supervision of children in the home and childhood injuries. She interviewed parents and transcribed the interviews.

The family travelled a lot, including a sabbatical in Australia where Barbara learned to quilt (one of her passions), to play tennis, to appreciate Aboriginal art and how to avoid snakes and deadly spiders! Other memorable trips took the family to Italy, Mexico, Texas and more.
Barbara knew Club member, Claudia Etches, and heard about her hiking group. She went to a General Meeting at the Steelworker's Hall and sat with some hikers. She soon joined CFUW (1997) and participated in the hiking group. "*The following year I was tapped to be on the Executive, first taking on Member Services. I've been a CFUW member for 25+ years because of the Club's various activities and the many congenial women I've met.*"

"*I joined interest groups while still working, fitting them in. Besides hiking, I joined the Gourmet Dinner Group (now defunct), the Book Exchange Group and the 1st Thursday Book Club. I get to the Gardening Group and Art Touring Group when I can. I enjoy the activities, the social nature of chatting on a hike, having coffee together afterwards, and being out in nature."*

In terms of Executive Committees Barbara says: "*I've been Hospitality chair, Vice President, President and Past President. This year, I'm Member Services chair; my third or fourth time! I've also been involved in fundraising for Scholarship, including organizing two card parties, and a quilt raffle.*"

When Barbara had young children, she took on many related volunteer roles, including a nursery school Board member, parent-teacher associations, Guelph Children's Singers Executive, and the "Art Image" classroom program. "*More currently, I volunteer with the Friends of the Guelph*

Public Library book Sale and used to volunteer with Guelph Spring Festival while it was running."

"*CFUW used to have a quilting group. I now belong to a similar group in Guelph, where I also meet like-minded women. You hear the stories that inspired each quilt."* Barbara has a quilt on the go and ideas for new ones just 'come to her!'

Barbara finally retired in 2010. "*What keeps me most busy? CFUW (!), the house, garden, planning for quilts, going to the Y four times a week, traveling (plus the required planning and logistics), jigsaw puzzles, cooking, reading and helping Leon with the garden*." Barbara and Leon also regularly enjoys the theatre, musicals, galleries and local markets.

She is passionate about desserts! She bakes and even makes ice cream. She is teaching her six-year-old grandson Finley about quality chocolate and pastry. She also has great home sewing skills (clothes, upholstery, *etc.*).

"*What gets me up in the morning? My To-Do List! My own reward for getting through it is working on a puzzle, sewing and/or reading."*

"*My top strengths? I'd say I'm adaptable, persistent, a problem solver, a planner, a learner, highly empathetic and loyal."*

Others would often add that Barbara is open and friendly, definitely likes learning visually, excels at doing a variety of new things and is good with people of all ages.

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Lydia Thomas



Lydia Thomas (née Woltz) was born in 1958 in Galt/Cambridge, the youngest of five and the only one born in Canada. Her parents (dressmaker Mom and green house worker Dad) immigrated from the Netherlands after WWII, bringing three brothers and a sister for Lydia. The five children all worked as soon as they legally could to help support the family; their educations were obtained at night.

Lydia left home at age 16, first finding work in a couple of different offices. A neighbour told her that her company, Carborundum Abrasives in Plattsville, ON, was hiring. She leaped at the chance to increase her income, and they hired her.

Lydia soon found factory work boring, and, loving to learn, went to Conestoga College at night, taking business courses such as typing and supervisory studies. She was promoted to an office position at Carborundum. She later moved to Customer Service and, being good with people, enjoyed that work.

"*I worked in customer service for 17 years. I also took computer courses such as the spreadsheet program Excel at Conestoga. I was given company data by my boss and used it to improve the operations / productivity of the company. Because of my experience, I was hired by a small Canadian Abrasives firm as a Manufacturers Rep / Industrial Sales, again, very unusual for a woman. They took a chance on me and I was scared, but not for long!"* She was now working face-to-face with all male customers. "*As the only female in industrial sales, I had to have a thick skin and sense of humour. After all, I was in my 40's at this point! I enjoyed visiting customers in their factories and in particular, seeing how things were manufactured. (Sidenote, I love the T.V. show 'How it's Made'). I worked in Industrial Sales until I retired at age 62 with a very nice buyout.*"

"*I was still on the road, driving the 401 in a big truck, and enjoyed teaching workplace and grinder safety to clients. A teacher at Conestoga contacted me about teaching grinder safety training to her 'Women in Skilled Trades' class. I taught this night class to an all-girls class; no pay, but I did receive a nice mug!"*

"*I now had a 'life', an education and involvement in our country*."

"*Marriage and family? Yes, I've been together with/married to Peter Thomas for the past 20 years. We met online - he still makes me laugh! Peter has two sons, is a 'child and youth worker' working with autistic kids; he likes children. I have a daughter (Jackie) and an 8-year-old granddaughter, Jasmine Rose, now in Grade 3. She is 4'7" tall and may have an athletic career ahead of her!"*

"*About CFUW, I was first Isobelle Gray's rowing partner. Before she died, I went on a 'Take Back the Night' walk and heard about CFUW's interest groups. I joined CFUW Guelph in 2024, after I'd retired. I stay a member because the women are interesting and I like the Interest groups. I also like the General Meetings and the great speakers!"*

"*I am currently in Sonia's Euchre Group and enjoy making her laugh! I'd like to join the Cycling and the Snowshoeing Groups and hope to in the not too distant future - they would get me out in Nature! Again, I enjoy meeting interesting women and having great conversations! As well, interest groups are usually scheduled and I can commit time for something I enjoy doing just for me."*

"*I co-chair Member Services along with Barbara Kuczynski, which puts us both on the club's Executive. I'm enjoying the meetings so far. I'm also on Deb Thompson's Advocacy Committee. I really like Advocacy and am learning more about issues affecting us; currently that is learning about politics."*

"*One personal comment: when I agreed to be interviewed for the Guelph Line, I first thought about it; even though it is a bit of "an obligation" (aka it is giving of my time), but I'm happy to do it."*

"*I volunteer with Guelph's Salvation Army's 'Community Services' which provides various forms of emergency assistance and support to our community*

(guelphsafamilyservices@salvationarmy.ca) *I work in the clothing room, hand out food and help our unhoused population with anything they need like food, – clothing or blankets and so on. And during COVID, I decided to start my own book club to intentionally link my various best friends together, and love it!*"

"*I belong to the YMCA in Guelph and like going to different classes. Since meeting my husband Peter, I've also started doing art. I've taken watercolour lessons in Waterloo and am currently taking acrylic painting classes at Wyndham Art from David Caesar. CFUW also keeps me busy, as does grand-daughter, Jasmine Rose. We love having her for weekend visits; we go for hikes, bike rides and do arts and crafts."*

"*What gets me up in the morning? My dog Indy, an older Lakeland Terrier, who is 20 pounds of fun, lets me know he has to go out to pee and a walk; I also have a good cup of coffee - both get me up (and going) in the morning."*

"*I'd say my strengths would be: work ethic and self-discipline which I learned as a kid, the related trio of 'curiosity/learner/problem solver', which made me good at my job and people skills such as adaptability and knowing how to build teams. I love meeting new people - my husband says I will talk to anybody, and he's correct!"*

Others who know Lydia would add: self-confidence, openness and friendliness to her list of strengths.

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