

Realizing potential. For all women.



# *The Guelph Line*

**September 2025**

Water Street Church  
287 Water Street, Guelph ON

Business Meeting  
Speaker & Wrap-Up

7:00 - 7:45 p.m.  
8:00 - 9:15 p.m.

**General Meetings will be held in a hybrid format, in person and on Zoom; the Zoom link will be e-mailed to members 1-2 days before each meeting.**

Those who are able, please come to the meeting.  
If you need a ride, please contact [communicationscfuwguelph@gmail.com](mailto:communicationscfuwguelph@gmail.com)



## **September General Meeting: Tuesday September 23, 2025**

**Naomi Smith, Indigenous Artist & Educator**

*Indigenous History through the Art of Beading*



Naomi is an award-winning Indigenous Artist, Maker and Educator from the Chippewas of Nawash First Nation, Neyaashiinigmiing, Ontario. She has for over 25 years shared traditional teachings with various communities and groups.

Her work focuses on the ways of the Indigenous people of the Great Lakes region from a historical and contemporary perspective often through the story of beads. Naomi's artwork embraces ancestral designs using quillwork, beadwork and other indigenous methods and materials.

She has exhibited her work across Canada and internationally.

## **October General Meeting: Tuesday October 28, 2025**

**Emma Allen-Vercoe, Professor & Canada Research Chair, University of Guelph**

*The Human Gut*



Dr. Allen-Vercoe will be speaking on the Human Gut Biome. Dr. Allen-Vercoe is an internationally recognized expert in the field of human microbiomes. She obtained a B.Sc. (Hons) in biochemistry in 1993 from the University of London, and her Ph.D. in molecular microbiology through an industrial partnership with the Veterinary Laboratories Agency, conferred through the Open University in 1999.

In 2005, she chose to focus her research on the normal microbes of the human gut. As time went on, she broadened her interest to focus her research on the unculturable microbes. To assist in this, she developed a model gut system dubbed ROBOGUT. Dr. Allen-Vercoe moved her lab to the University of Guelph in 2007. She has again enlarged the scope of her research to include the gut biomes of insects such as bees. Her byline is "*We are the spaceship for our microbes*"

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Greetings everyone, current and new members!

I hope you are savouring the sweetness of late summer, and are anticipating with earnest the crisp fall days that signal the renewal of our club activities. It's a time to refill the calendar with interest group activities, social gatherings, productive meetings, and special events. A time to renew and begin new friendships, and to continue to learn through our general meeting speakers, through our advocacy group, and from each other. Pull on a sweater and let's go!

As some of you may know, Maureen Weaver has withdrawn as President for this year as she continues to recover from a vehicle accident.

Since I was incoming Vice President, I will be taking on the role of President for 2025-26. The duties of the Vice President will be absorbed by others. Jo Ann Hayter will attend Scholarship Committee meetings, and Susan Brown will chair the Resolutions Committee. Thank you Jo Ann and Susan!

I spent several mornings escaping this summer's intense heat delving into the CFUW Guelph archives stored in the Guelph Public Library. I was transfixed reading a sampling of minutes, the first ones hand-written 80 years ago; reading correspondence from mayors, federal and provincial ministers in response to letters written by our club's Advocacy chairs; poring over photos of past executives and club events, and absorbing the many contributions our club has made to our community. I could feel the vitality, creativity and energy of the women who have made CFUW Guelph the respected club that it is.

Much has changed over 80 years, but our core values endure.

Our purpose today is:

1. To advance the status of women, human rights and to work toward gender equality.
2. To encourage members to put their education and experience to use in the community.
3. To arouse and sustain an informed interest in public affairs among members; to encourage an active participation in such affairs by qualified women; and to provide an opportunity for effectual, concerted action.
4. To support excellence in education and to promote access to ongoing and higher education of women.

5. To promote understanding, friendship and cooperation among members and with like-minded organizations.

The accomplishments of the first few years set the foundation and have propelled us forward to continue to **Learn, Connect and Advocate**. 80 years and still a thriving organization – that’s something to celebrate!

*Save the date!* On **Tuesday, December 2, 2025**, we are hosting an event to celebrate the **80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of CFUW Guelph**, highlighted by renowned speaker Sally Armstrong.

Sally is a human rights activist, journalist and award-winning author who has covered stories about women and girls in zones of conflict all over the world. She has received many awards in recognition of her work, including the Amnesty International Canada Media Award (four times) and the Mahatma Gandhi Peace Award. She was the Massey Lecturer in 2019, and is an Officer of the Order of Canada. Sally will bring news of the indisputable wins for women, as well as a cautionary tale about who is holding us back. She will share the way forward in her talk, **Global Women: Gains and Setbacks**. This event is not just for our club members; we also invite individuals outside of our club who share our values. So spread the word, gather your interest group members, and invite your friends and relatives to join us for an engaging, stimulating talk and luncheon on December 2. *(Please note: This anniversary luncheon will be the main meal gathering of the year for our club. It will replace the dinner traditionally organized for the May Annual General Meeting.)*

Details of the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary event including location and ticket information will be confirmed shortly and sent in a separate email later this month.

We are putting together a **tech team** to assist with hybrid general meetings. Training will be provided. Please consider embracing this learning opportunity. You will be much appreciated! Contact me at [gwenrevington@gmail.com](mailto:gwenrevington@gmail.com).

Would you like to receive weekly news from CFUW National? Subscribe to the **CFUW National Club Action Newsletter** here: [members.cfuw.org/club-action-newsletter](https://members.cfuw.org/club-action-newsletter)

If you’d like to stay abreast of **CFUW Ontario Council** news, sign up to receive their emails at: [Ontario Council News](#)

*Gwen Revington*

Our September Executive Committee meeting!



*Pictured (from left to right): Deb Thompson (Advocacy), Gwen Revington (President), Jane Kenny (Hospitality), Jo Ann Hayter (Past President), Jalene Lumb (Communications), Gabriella Facchini (Scholarship), Penny Hendricks (Secretary), Barbara Kuczynski (Membership) & Heather Bailey (Treasurer). Missing from the photo are: Janet Bruder, Lydia Thomas & Susan Brown.*

## **EXECUTIVE REPORTS**

### **MEMBER SERVICES**

The renewal forms have been trickling in, but we want a FLOOD! The deadline for submission is **SEPTEMBER 30** to be included in the Blue Book (CFUW Guelph directory). Also we are looking for a new convenor for the Cross Country Skiing special interest group.

*Barbara Kuczynski,  
Member Services Co-Chair*

### **ADVOCACY**

Within CFUW Guelph, the Advocacy Committee coordinates and leads much of our club's advocacy work. Our efforts include:

- Meeting regularly with federal and provincial elected representatives.
- Implementing CFUW policies in areas where members have particular interest, expertise, or passion.
- Monitoring issues that arise locally, provincially, or nationally and recommending appropriate action (e.g., letters, petitions, meetings).

All members are welcome to participate in advocacy activities and to attend our monthly meetings (second Thursday of each month). Member involvement is essential to the effectiveness of our advocacy work.

### **Recent and Upcoming Advocacy Activities**

- On June 27, members of the Advocacy Committee met with our provincial representative, MPP Mike Schreiner, to discuss pressing issues for women, families, and equity in our community.



Left to right: Advocacy members Lydia Thomas and Kate Ciceri; Mike Schreiner; Advocacy Chair Deb Thompson

- Upcoming meetings are scheduled with MP Dominique O'Rourke and MP Michael Chong to ensure CFUW Guelph's advocacy priorities are represented at the federal level.

We continue to support and partner with community organizations, including:

- Guelph-Wellington Women in Crisis
- Zonta Guelph
- YMCA of Three Rivers
- Guelph-Wellington Coalition for Social Justice
- Guelph-Wellington Poverty Elimination Task Force
- Basic Income Guelph

## Community Presence



*Barbara Kuczynski, Member Services Co-Chair and the library display*

From September 2–30, CFUW Guelph will host a display at Westminster Square Library. The exhibit highlights our Club including scholarships, advocacy and community partnerships. We invite new members and the public to learn how we are making a difference locally, provincially, and nationally. We encourage all members to spread the word and invite friends, neighbours, and colleagues to visit the display and discover the many ways CFUW Guelph is active in advocacy and community engagement.

## Upcoming Events

- September 18 – Take Back the Night**  
 Organized by Guelph-Wellington Women in Crisis, this annual march and rally raises awareness about sexual and gender-based violence and reclaims public spaces for women, girls, and gender-diverse people. CFUW Guelph is proud to stand in solidarity at this event. Marianne's Park, Gordon Street, 6 pm.
- September 20 – Draw the Line Event**  
 CFUW Guelph is proud to support the Draw the Line campaign.

### ***Event Details:***

**Date:** Saturday, September 20, 2025

**Time:** The event starts at 10:00 a.m.

**Location:** Royal City Park Gazebo, Guelph

### ***What is Draw the Line?***

A national wave of resistance to address issues like climate collapse, wealth hoarding, and the exploitation of public services and Indigenous lands.

A call for climate justice, migrant rights, economic fairness, Indigenous sovereignty, and anti-war solidarity.

[https://www.waterwatchers.ca/draw\\_the\\_line\\_2025](https://www.waterwatchers.ca/draw_the_line_2025)

- September 30 – Orange Shirt Day & National Day for Truth and Reconciliation**  
Orange Shirt Day honours the children who never returned home, the survivors of residential schools, and their families and communities. Public commemoration is vital to reconciliation, and all Canadians are encouraged to wear orange to show that Every Child Matters.
- October 21 – Chalmers Harvest Bowls Event**  
CFUW’s new community connection for the next three years is **Chalmers Community Services**, and we’re excited to share their upcoming **Harvest Bowls event**. If you’re available, we encourage you to attend and support this wonderful community initiative. More details and tickets here: [Harvest Bowls Event](#)
- November 25 – December 10 – The 16 Days of Activism**  
This global campaign begins on November 25, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, and concludes on December 10, International Human Rights Day. It calls for action to eliminate gender-based violence and highlights it as a grave human rights violation.
- December 6 – National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women**  
We will gather for the annual vigil to remember the 14 women murdered at L’Ecole Polytechnique in 1989 and to reaffirm our commitment to ending gender-based violence. Location and time to be announced.

### Special Report on Disinformation

*Submitted by Kate Ciceri*

One project CFUW Guelph advocacy is exploring is the topic of *disinformation*. It is a complex and diverse issue. Our intent is to share highlights of our research through our membership newsletter. Your thoughts and responses to this shared information are welcome.

#### What is disinformation?

Disinformation is defined as false information that is intentionally spread to mislead and manipulate, to deceive the public and /or to cause public harm. *Malinformation* refers to information based on truth, but exaggerated or presented out of context. Malinformation is shared with the intent to attack an idea, individual or organization.

Disinformation has arguably existed in some form throughout history. However, in 2013, the World Economic Forum identified it as a trend to observe and by 2016 - only three years later - numerous journals and organizations engaged in research on the topic, have identified disinformation as an existential threat to democracy, climate change, public safety, and human rights.

Disinformation exploits emotionally charged topics. It triggers fear and anger, fuelling distorted information systems and validating destructive beliefs and behaviours. It uses inflammatory language and distorts the truth. It feeds into *confirmation bias*: our tendency to accept information that confirms pre-existing beliefs and attitudes. Various forms of media

further amplify the spread of disinformation and online repetition leads to validation of this false information. In 2021, statistics Canada stated that 96% of Canadians saw information about the pandemic online that was false. 40% stated they believed the false information and shared it with others. Only 20% of Canadians fact checked.

*“Without facts, you have no truth, without truth, there is no trust, without all three we have no shared reality – and democracy – and all meaningful endeavours – are dead.”* Maria Resser, Filipino and American journalist and co-founder and CEO of Rappler.

The University of Cambridge offers an online 'Misinformation Susceptibility Test'. It is easy to take, and you are offered the option of allowing your response data to be used as part of ongoing research project or not to be used in that manner. You should feel comfortable in making your own decision about the use of your response data. I think you'll find it interesting - we urge you to give it a try.

Below is the link:

<https://yourmist.streamlit.app/>

Please contact Kate for more information:

[katecic@icloud.com](mailto:katecic@icloud.com)

### **Advocacy Committee Members**

Brenda Vegso, Maureen Weaver, Penny Hendricks, Lydia Thomas, Andrea Horton, Kate Ciceri, Kim Palazzo, Liz Fisk, Mary McEwen and Deb Thompson (Chair)

*Deb Thompson,  
Advocacy Chair*

### **TREASURER**

As of Sept 8, 48 members have paid their dues by e-transfer. If you wish to pay by e-transfer, just add CFUW Guelph as a new payee. *Please ensure that you use*

[treasurer.cfuwguelph@gmail.com](mailto:treasurer.cfuwguelph@gmail.com) *since no other email is linked to our bank account.*

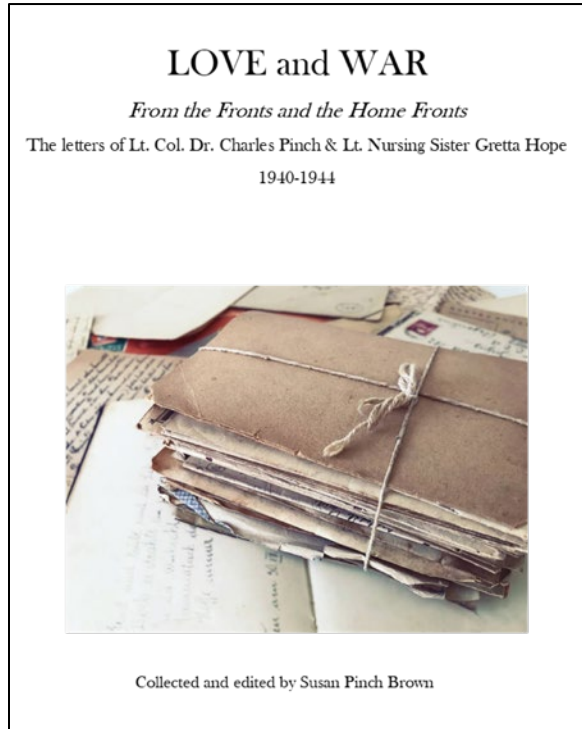
If you pay by e-transfer, please complete and email a copy of your membership form to [membership.cfuwguelph@gmail.com](mailto:membership.cfuwguelph@gmail.com) if there are any changes to your information and to indicate if any extra donation is going towards Scholarship or Community Connections. You could also include information on extra donations in the comment section of the e-transfer.

The funds for our **Community Partner – Chalmers Community Services Centre** - were collected by member donations in 2024-25 and we will make a payment of \$1,000 this Fall. There is also \$1,113 (\$608 carried over from 2023-24 and \$505 donated in 2024-25) available in the **One-time Fund**. If any member has a proposal for an organization or program that meets our goals and has a need for the funds, contact any member of the Executive Committee and we will send you the application form.

*Heather Bailey  
Treasurer*

## CLUB NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CFUW Guelph Member **Susan Brown** has published an epistolary narrative of the letters of her father Charlie and mother Greta during WWII.



Susan writes: "My father, a physician, joined the 11<sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance out of Guelph, Ontario and my mother, a nurse from Guelph, joined the 15<sup>th</sup> General Hospital out of Toronto, in 1939. Their story takes place in England, North Africa and Italy. The letters are between my father, his parents, and to my mother while she was in England, North Africa, and back in Canada. Letters from his parents to each of them are also included. These 476 letters portray the "ordinariness" of everyday service in the military medical corps during wartime. Between battles when treating casualties was their main function, their everyday work included illnesses, accidents and other challenges the troops experienced. These letters highlight the joy, sadness, excitement, tragedy and horror that many serving couples experienced during World War II.

My parents were the first Canadian military couple to be married in England during the Second World War. Although they were never able to live together during the war, after marriage their love grew into an ever-tightening bond, even with my mother's deployment to North Africa and my father's deployment to Italy. My mother returned from North Africa heading to Canada via England without seeing my father whose ship passed hers in the Mediterranean on his way to Italy. In 1944, he returned to Canada with a life altering illness contracted in Italy with a shortened life expectancy."

The book can be ordered from her website: [loveandwar.ca](http://loveandwar.ca)

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## INTEREST GROUP ACTIVITIES

### ARTS TOURING GROUP

The Arts Touring Group enjoyed a varied programme of events in the year 2024/2025. We attended art movies at the Galaxy Cinema, exhibitions in Fergus, and Elora and guided tours of the Art Gallery of Hamilton and the McMichael Gallery. We are now actively seeking new opportunities to enjoy the arts and to build friendships.

If you are a current member or a new member thinking of joining our group, we invite you to a meeting on *Thursday, September 18 at 2 p.m.* at the home of Connie Valeriotte, 3 Yeadon Court Guelph. At that meeting we will encourage members to share ideas and make suggestions for future events and offer assistance with planning and organizing events and activities. Our aim is to maintain a vibrant energetic group of arts enthusiasts. **Please contact Clare Irwin if you wish to come to the meeting at Connie's on September 18th. [clare-irwin@rogers.com](mailto:clare-irwin@rogers.com)**

Thank you.

*Submitted by Maureen Busby-O'Connor, Clare Irwin, Connie Valeriotte  
Arts Touring Planning Group*

## CYCLING



*(L to R): Barb Hale, Diane Boyd, Sonia Spekkens*

Three of us hardy souls braved 50 km/hour wind to cycle from West Montrose to Wallenstein and back. We had fun exploring a new Mennonite bakery about a mile from our regular stop at the Wallenstein General Store.

We hope to have members lead Tuesday morning rides on our city trails and also longer out of town rides on Fridays. If you're hesitant about cycling because you haven't done it in a while, give one of our shorter Tuesday city rides a try.

*Submitted by Sonia Spekkens*

## EUCHRE

Our first Gathering of the year will be on September 29<sup>th</sup> at the home of Sonia Spekkens. We will meet at 1:15 pm to play a few games of Euchre and enjoy some snacks and drinks. New players are welcome. We can teach new players the game and can help refresh players who haven't played in a while.

*Submitted by Sonia Spekkens*

## GOLF



*(L to R): Diane Boyd, Lynda Gilham,  
Joyce Johnson, Brenda Coomber*

The CFUW Golf group meets Tuesdays at the Victoria Park Valley golf course and plays 9 holes. Here are a group of happy golfers after another successful round on a beautiful fall morning. If you are interested in joining in while the weather continues to cooperate (or next season!), please contact our group Coordinator, Cathy Farr: [cathy.farr@sympatico.ca](mailto:cathy.farr@sympatico.ca)

## **SCRIBBLERS**

Members of the Scribblers writing group are sharing pieces in the newsletter to let club members know what we are up to.

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### **"Ethel left us"**

#### **Ann Middleton**

When I was at Journalism School almost 60 years ago, there were a few rules that we learned were inviolable.

1. You never used an exclamation mark when a period would do. Although it was allowed that there could be one possible exception: the Second Coming. That was a time when Christianity was at its peak in Canada. Although we didn't know it then, church attendance would fall dramatically in the following decades. But we probably can't blame the decline in Christian observance for the increase in the use of exclamation marks.
2. When referring to a woman in a newspaper story, you called her Mrs. Alexander Middleton or in the unfortunate event that she was a spinster, she was known as Miss Ann Manore, subsequently Mrs. Middleton or Miss Manore, never simply Ann Middleton or Ann Manore.
3. And we learned that at the end of life, people die. That may seem obvious, but even then there were a lot of lost husbands and wives, others that had passed on, passed away or simply "gone on" in my mother's words.

Things have really changed in the ensuing half century. There are few deaths now. In fact, in last weekend's Globe and Mail, although there were 19 obituaries there was only one death. All the others passed away, 11 of them peacefully, or so the notices say. I have become an habitué of the obituaries column in the last few years and I am delighted – in spite of my training - to report that euphemisms are alive and well, and I have to say I've come to love the more colourful ones.

For example, just 10 days ago Ethel left us at 92, her tennis racquet in hand, her skis on her shoulder and a French book in her handbag. Not too long before that, Sylvia stepped out to join her husband in eternity as promised, and Scott took his final magic carpet ride. I learned that one poor man was infamous for his wit and charm within his family; that another was delivered, postage paid, to heaven to join the bass section of heaven's choir; and yet another was suddenly promoted to the upper chamber.

A dedicated railway buff departed on his last train; an able seaman went off watch; and a golfer quietly teed off on her eternal golf course. Rather worryingly, last weekend, Liska, age 72, joined the choir invisible, her children at her side. It was with some relief that I learned further down in the obit that her children had in fact survived her.

One of my all-time favourites is Richard who parked his tractor for the last time, having quietly plowed his final furrow. The eagles and coyotes, the owls and horses, the garden and the dogs occupied his hours and lent purpose to his life. Richard remains with his family in each fencepost he replaced, every tree he planted, each small engine he repaired. A send-off doesn't get much richer than that one.

**MEET A MEMBER! Contributed by Melodie Wynne****Clare Irwin**

Clare Irwin (née Naish) was born and grew up with her parents and younger sister Sally in the suburbs of London, England. Clare attended the local elementary and grammar schools until admission in 1965 to Southampton University where she obtained a B.Sc. in Physiology and Biochemistry. Her degree led to laboratory work for several research organizations in and around London beginning with an institute studying the toxicity of chemicals used in the food industry and that could be added to packaging to improve shelf-life. This was followed by laboratory work at the Medical Research Council and then with Eli Lilly. It was at Southampton University that Clare met Peter Irwin who was studying Aeronautical Engineering; they married in 1970.

In 1971, they moved to Montreal as landed immigrants where Peter began a Ph.D. at McGill University. Clare obtained work in the Pharmacology Department of the McGill medical school. This was a very positive step in many ways. It was a source of amazement to the couple and to family visiting from England, that their standard of living, even as students, was much better than was possible at that time for young people in England. Sally, Clare's sister, impressed by life in Canada, followed them to Montreal a year or so later. Once Peter completed his Ph.D. he joined the National Research Council in Ottawa and Clare worked in the Biochemistry department of the University of Ottawa. They lived in an apartment beside the Rideau Canal on the opposite side to Ottawa U. Clare noted: *"once the canal froze, a walk across the ice was a great short-cut to work!"*

In 1976 their son Graeme was born and Clare, wanting a career change, began a part-time M.Sc. in Health Administration at U. Ottawa; a relatively new academic discipline in Canada. Two years later, their daughter Helen arrived and in 1980, the family moved to Guelph when Peter joined a small consulting engineering company. With her Masters degree in hand, Clare began taking service planning contracts with health and social services organizations. This led to her joining a consulting firm that focused on improving community-based care for the elderly, as well as addiction, mental health, and acquired brain injury services. Working from home, she travelled regularly to clients around Ontario. Life was busy but still left time to spend with the family boating on Georgian Bay and vacationing here and overseas. Over time, Clare and her colleagues wound down the consulting work and she chose to retire in 2000.

Clare was first a member of CFUW Guelph in the 1980's (for about 5 years), however, she was too busy with work and family and did not continue her membership. However, once Clare retired, she rejoined CFUW Guelph in 2000. At that time she saw the need to rebuild her local circle of friends and acquaintances with whom to share her interests and to identify not-for-profit groups with whom she might volunteer her time and skills. *"The interest groups, and friendships I've made are why I've remained a member. My interest group involvement has changed over the*

*years as I became more involved with other volunteer activities and came to terms with physical limitations of aging!! I have enjoyed being an active member of groups such as gardening, cross country skiing, and civic affairs but now I am involved with the Art Touring and Exploring Music groups”.*

Another rewarding experience was her membership in the important task group (within Advocacy) that wrote the resolution on Basic Income that was adopted by the membership of CFUW National. *"I also felt it important to contribute to the running of the club and held positions on the Executive (Secretary, Communications) and, [luckily for us], was editor of The Guelph Line and managed the email account for many years”.* Since retiring, Clare has volunteered with the local affiliate of Habitat for Humanity (H4H) (2000-2008). She was a founding board member and very involved in obtaining a Trillium grant to start a ReStore in Guelph. *"I had written grant proposals for years, but unless you count working for Marks and Spencer in London during the Christmas rush, I had no retail experience. It was a steep learning curve but I am happy to say that the Guelph store has thrived and has expanded to Fergus”.*

Clare is also a committed volunteer with Pollination Guelph (PG) (2008 – present). Soon after joining, she became a member of the board of directors; PG is a new organization devoted to raising public awareness of the threats facing pollinating insects and the critical importance of native plants. In addition to public education, the organization has designed and installed pollinator habitat/gardens at several locations. Clare now gets her gardening fix as the coordinator for the Gosling Pollinator Gardens at Hospice Wellington, as well as helping at other PG sites and caring for her own garden.

*"I have many things to keep me busy in retirement, apart from volunteering and CFUW interest groups. As we are less able to travel, I especially look forward to visits from our children (now living in Banff and Corner Brook), our five grandchildren, and my sister and her spouse. At this time of the year it is also the opportunity to spend time outdoors and in nature that gets me up and going - not to mention a cup of strong coffee”.*

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## **Sonia Spekkens**



Sonia Spekkens (née Maciejewski) was born in Rouyn-Noranda, PQ. with an older sister and younger brother. Her love of sports in her Quebec grade school continued in North Bay at an all girl's boarding High School. Moving to Ottawa, Sonia graduated with a B.Sc in Recreation Administration from Ottawa U.

During her studies she met her husband Andre (“Andy”) while selling tickets to Ottawa U’s Frosh Queen Ball at the entrance to the Common Room. “The crazy guy walked into the Common Room and immediately came back out to the entrance to asked if I wanted to join the Student Radio station as an announcer. In virtually the same breath, he asked me

to go with him to the Ball. Clearly the stars were aligned because we've just celebrated our 50th wedding anniversary!"

A move to Iowa City, USA, to further Andy's education in health and hospital administration, provided Sonia with a wonderful opportunity for some hands-on health care experience at the University of Iowa Hospital. "Being permitted to be an observer in the OR during a complex surgical procedure was an absolute highlight." In her spare time, she volunteered to help design an outdoor Experiential Playground at their married student complex. When Andy's career took them to Windsor, Sonia studied at St. Clair College and obtained a Furniture Technology diploma. Although her plan to start a custom furniture business with a friend changed when they then moved to Burlington, her passion for anything with wood remains constant. She is in the process of completing three cherry wood charcuterie boards for her three (very fortunate!) children, Tara, Derek and Erika.

In Burlington, Sonia took some personal time and joined the Burlington Newcomers Club, making several lifelong friends. "This club is very much like our Guelph CFUW club: wonderful women and great friends with whom to share interests." She worked for the Royal Bank (RBC) as a Branch Manager, a Manager of Personal Banking, and as an Investment Advisor for RBC Dominion Securities, and finally for Cowan Financial Solutions, retiring in 2016. "I loved each new transition, learning new things, meeting and helping wonderful clients with their finances".

Sonia joined our club in 1991, thanks to a chance encounter with Terri Belyea at an outdoor fundraiser. Sonia became Recording Secretary for the Executive under Shirley Bilanski. Her yearning to join many CFUW interest groups had to take a back seat during her career changes. Years later, at a General Meeting concerning the GWI financial issue, she joined the ad hoc GWI Committee, subsequently agreeing to take on the position of VP as our club's GWI representative. The same year she became both VP and President, then President again, followed by Past-President. As VP, she chaired Document Review, Resolutions and was an ex-officio Member of the Scholarship Committee. This was all during Covid! "Not having been very involved with CFUW other than through the 2nd Monday Book Group and the now defunct Gourmet Group, the learning curve was huge! I'm forever thankful for the super supportive Executive!"

*"Upon retirement, I joined Hiking, Cycling, Art Appreciation and recently started the Snowshoeing and Euchre groups. I particularly and continue to enjoy the 2nd Monday Book Group. For many years it provided me with a non-financial reading outlet and introduced me to topics, different points of view and a variety of authors. More importantly, they are a fantastic group of women that I truly cherish and love spending time with!"* She stays a member because she finds community, laughter, has fun, and enjoys learning about and sharing fun times with others, while sharing a love of both indoor and outdoor activities. "I am constantly encouraging any woman I meet, who expresses an interest in doing more in the community or wanting to meet other likeminded women, to try CFUW."

Sonia is also a member of the Rotary Club of Guelph-Trillium, a member of their Ribfest Committee, and former Board Member, Membership Director and Community Allocation Director. In addition, she was a former VP and President of Hospice Wellington whose executive was instrumental in building the residential hospice on Scottsdale Dr. She was chair of the Donor Recognition Committee with the Partners for Better Health campaign in support of the three

Guelph hospitals. *“Because volunteering has always been modeled by our parents, it is second nature for me and my siblings to keep that legacy going.”*

*“Retirement is good but busy! What keeps me busy? Spending time with my family, friends and being involved in volunteer activities, traveling, going to the theatre, sewing, woodworking, gardening, hiking, cycling, and snowshoeing.”*

*“What gets me up in the morning? My zest for life, plans with family and friends, my to-do list and just keeping active!”*

*“Strengths? I’d have to say I am organized, intuitive and empathetic. I’m adaptable, love to learn, am good with people and tend not to get too frazzled about the small stuff.”*

*“I also believe in ‘Paying It Forward’. Because kind people sponsored each of my parents to come to Canada after the Second World War, I worked with a team of five committed Guelph individuals to sponsor an Afghan refugee family of four whose dad languished in an Indonesian refugee camp for 10 years. Together, with this same generous group of individuals, we are now in the process of sponsoring the dad’s Afghan friend who has been living in this same refugee camp for 13 years. How blessed we are to have been born in Canada!”*



The **Guelph Line** is published six times a year (September, November, January, March, May and June/July).

Submissions are solicited early in each month of publication. For the 2025-26 season, the deadlines for submission are:

September 9, 2025

November 14, 2025

January 16, 2026

March 13, 2026

May 15, 2026

June TBD

Please submit material to the **Newsletter Editor** email: [bcoomber@uoguelph.ca](mailto:bcoomber@uoguelph.ca)

Club activities and membership details are available online at [cfuwguelph.org](http://cfuwguelph.org)