



Spring Newsletter

2020



President's Message

Time heals almost everything. Give time, time.

Regina Brett

The current COVID-19 pandemic has turned our lives upside down and created days unseen since WWII. The self isolation and physical distancing has been hard for all of us.

Our Club has thrived throughout the decades with our varied programs and long time friendships. In the interim before our next meeting let's continue to communicate with fellow members by phone, e-mail or whatever method is comfortable to you. Keep in mind that physical distancing does not mean social distancing.

One of the great joys of being a member of this Club has turned out to be our involvement with the receptions hosted at the Citizenship Court. Thank you to all who participated in this very worthy effort. Ceremonies are not taking place during this pandemic, but we look forward to greeting new Canadians in the future. Sadly, with Colleen Johnson's passing, there will be one less smiling hostess next time.

Encounters with Canada was cancelled as well this year because of the pandemic. Our sincere hope is that it will be in place next year, allowing us to again sponsor two students to attend this excellent program.

The WCCH 2019 Woman of Spirit Award celebrated the many and varied achievements of an extraordinary woman from the Greater Hamilton Area. What an exciting event it was, including a capacity

crowd for the celebratory luncheon. The second Woman of Spirit Award will be presented in October 2021.

And, finally, our AGM, scheduled for May 13, 2020 will now be held at the next regular meeting of the WCCH. A notice of meeting, agenda and all necessary reports will be distributed one month prior to that date. Of course, at this time, we have no idea what that date will be.

Thank you for being part of the Women's Canadian Club of Hamilton, for attending our meetings and for your many kind words of encouragement to your Board. We will be keeping you informed as to the 2020-2021 program as soon as it is set.

I am very much looking forward to this next year with everyone.

Thank you to the Board for their support and friendships this past year. It's been a privilege to get to know all of you better. I hope that you, as a member of the WCCH, will consider joining the Board in 2020-2021: I know that, like me, you will find the experience to be very rewarding.

Now, let's celebrate the arrival of Spring, including good health, and say a prayer for all of the essential and front line workers and those who are battling this virus.

*Susan Ricketts
President*

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#Covid19
#FlattenTheCurve
#PhysicalDistancing
#StayHome
#WashYourHands

HAMILTON DURING THE SPANISH FLU PANDEMIC OF 1918-1919

After Past President, Lee Gowers, indicated her curiosity about the involvement of The Women's Canadian Club during the Spanish Flu Pandemic of 1918-1919, I decided to do some research. Firstly, I consulted entries in the club's guest speaker book during that period and found that there were no meetings recorded between February 1918 and February 1919. Being unable to locate any other information about the club from sources such as Board meeting minutes from that time, one can only assume that meetings were not held during the first 2 waves of the pandemic in Hamilton.

Due to having to stay at home during the current pandemic, I resorted to trying to find out information thanks to "Google" on my computer. Learning that a third wave of the influenza, later identified as H1N1, occurred in Hamilton between January to April 1919 with the peak being in March, I was surprised that meetings of the WCCH were held in February, March and April 1919. Of particular interest to our club, which honoured Dr. Elizabeth Bagshaw as our famous Hamiltonian to emulate at last year's "Woman of Spirit Award" event, is the fact that during the pandemic, Dr. Elizabeth Bagshaw was providing care to approximately 25-30 pregnant women per month. This would have been a challenging and concerning time for Dr. Bagshaw since pregnant women and their babies at that time were considered at a greater risk from the influenza and sadly reports and obituaries can be found online showing a higher mortality rate. Another connection to the pandemic for Dr. Bagshaw was the death from influenza and pneumonia of her long-time friend, Jimmie Dickinson, from university days, whom she had corresponded with since graduating from the University of Toronto as a doctor in 1905.

Despite not being able to uncover further information about the WCCH during those years, knowing that the membership consisted of dynamic ladies, who had shown leadership and community involvement by banding together to form the club in 1912, I would assume that they would have done their part to provide assistance during the pandemic. Perhaps, some would have been amongst the approximately 150 members of the I.O.D.E., who established a programme to prepare and serve more than 1,000 meals daily for 3 months out of the kitchen at First Methodist Church, Hamilton. Perhaps, they were amongst the residents who responded to the appeal for the use of their private vehicles for delivering food, medical supplies, etc. Perhaps, they volunteered at the relief hospitals to care for patients suffering from the influenza that were established at the historic "Ballinahinch" estate on James Street South (now housing luxury condominium apartments), at the site of the former Jockey Club at Barton and Ottawa Streets and at the former home of Hamilton pioneer, Robert Land, on Barton Street to ease the strain on the 2 local hospitals in Hamilton.

If any of you in the WCCH have any information and insight into the involvement of the club during the 1918-1919 Pandemic, please let us know.

Submitted by Ruth Pearson

YOUR WCCH BOARD

Despite the current shutdown your WCCH Board is continuing to work to keep the Club going. We have learned to ZOOM! Well, some of us have. Not without some glitches and giggles, but we did manage to have a meeting and sort through some issues. Everyone is doing well and keeping busy. Pat Saunders is out walking every day, while Susan Ricketts plays piano for 30 minutes each day ending with a rousing version of O Canada. Louise Noel-Ambrose is taking some much-needed 'me' time to recover and rejuvenate while Mary-Lisa Russo is working from home and discovering that she is a pretty good artist. Diane Chiarelli is sewing facemasks while Alison Buffett is learning French. Joan Nuxoll is taking care of grandchildren and Christina Begley has welcomed, from a safe social-distance, a new great-granddaughter. Mary Lorimer is keeping in touch with family via ZOOM and Ruth Pearson has been photographing the activities of the grandsons she lives with so to document this interesting time. Lee Gowers is not getting through her to-do list but is trying to exercise regularly. We are all looking forward to the day when hair salons are open!



We are actively seeking new members for the Board, specifically a treasurer. The role of treasurer requires you to be able to keep records and write cheques. The WCCH is not a registered charity so there is no government paperwork to deal with. If you can help fill this vital role, or wish to serve in another capacity (member at large?) please contact the WCCH at WCCofHamilton@gmail.com or the WCCH President at susanricketts72@gmail.com.



WCCH Board member Mary-Lisa Russo was the recipient of a Heritage Volunteer Recognition certificate from the Hamilton-Wentworth Heritage Association.

The certificates were presented during the Heritage Day ceremony on February 22, at Hamilton City Hall. The citation from the WCCH read “ *Mary Lisa brings youth and energy to the Board of the Women’s Canadian Club of Hamilton. Her suggestions for programming, contributions of door prizes and willingness to promote the club through her various social networks have all helped the Club grow and remain relevant. We look forward to her continuing with the Board and leading us into the future!* ” It was noted by the presenter that Mary-Lisa brings down the average age of the board members by decades! Mary-Lisa is pictured here with her very proud mother, who often attends WCCH luncheons.



Sarah Jama, a Hamilton-based community organizer and co-founder of the Disability Justice Network, spoke at the February Luncheon of the WCCH. She is pictured here, just after signing the WCCH guest book, with members of the WCCH Board. From the left, Mary Lorimer, Pat Saunders, Diane Chiarelli, Christina Begley, Alison Buffett, Susan Ricketts, Ruth Pearson and Mary-Lisa Russo.



MEMBERSHIP (noun): the fact of being a member of a group; belonging either individually or collectively to a group. So reads the Oxford Dictionary definition of membership. While no great help in determining the meaning of the word, a reference check did reveal that the term membership was proclaimed as far back as 1614.

Closer to current times (late 1800's) we find that Hamilton is credited with being the location of the first social club formed under the Canadian Club Movement to refer to membership. Founded by Charles McCulloch its stated purpose was to encourage the study of Canadian history, literature and resources. Also included was the recognition of native worth and talent, all the while fostering a patriotic sentiment. Enthusiasm led to the formation of 14 Clubs in only thirteen years. Because Membership was restricted to men only it was only a matter of time before women realized the value of having a Club of their own. Even though Hamilton has been credited with being the location of the founding group of the Canadian Club Movement the Women's Canadian Club of Hamilton was the last incorporated of the remaining six Clubs. According to a recent search they are: Montreal (1907), Winnipeg (1907), Toronto (1908), London (1910), Ottawa (1910), Calgary (1911) and Hamilton (1912).

Somewhat ironically it was the Women's Canadian Club of Hamilton who commissioned a plaque to be constructed recognizing Hamilton as the location of the founding of the Canadian Club Movement. While the date of the commission was 1913, one year after the Women's Club was incorporated the plaque was not mounted until 1993 at the present location on the Pigott Building on James Street South.

Membership in the Women's Canadian Club of Hamilton continues to be an important component of our Club. A membership fee is payable upon registration and renewable annually in September. Membership includes reduced pricing on all meals, eligibility to serve on the Board of Directors as well as vote on matters brought before the Annual General Meeting. The membership fee allows us to provide receptions for new Canadians at Citizenship Court, sponsor students to attend Encounters with Canada and cover any administrative costs.

The record indicates that the 2019-2020 term began with 73 Members listed in five (5) categories:

Honorary Members: 2, Past Presidents (who by Board agreement are not required to pay a membership fee - It should be noted that the 2 recent Past Presidents have declined this benefit and are included in the Renewed Members category): 5, Renewed Members: 33, Unrenewed members: 26, New Members: 7. A warm welcome is extended to: Rita Bloch, Eva Cheshire, Susanne Noordyk, Denice Hill, Julia Peterson, Antoinette Spinosa, and Colleen Wicken. May their Membership be a meaningful experience.

Unfortunately, not included in this number are four members who died this term: – June Charters, Aileen Rowell, Norma Hitchcox, Colleen Johnson. May they rest in peace knowing they will be missed.

In Memoriam



Norma Hitchcox, a long-time member of the WCCH who served on the Board in various capacities, including as President in 1998-1990 passed away on December 13, 2019 at the age of 95. Norma leaves behind her son and daughter-in-law, Doug and Trish, and grandchildren Dean and Nicole. Her husband, William, predeceased her in 2006. Those who knew Norma will agree with these words from her obituary: "Norma led a long and interesting life, and was fiercely independent to the end."



Colleen Johnson passed away on April 26 following a brief battle with cancer. Colleen served on the WCCH Board as Membership Chair and was very active at the receptions at Citizenship Court. Her smiling face and always happy demeanour will be missed. Our sympathies to her husband George, and their children.

June Charters, who first joined the WCCH in 1994, passed away on October 14, 2019 in her ninety-first year. June was a graduate of the Hamilton General Hospital School of Nursing (class of 1952). She will be deeply missed by her children, grand-children, nieces and nephews and many dear friends.



A shout out to the women who are leading this country through the pandemic! Clockwise from top left: Dr. Barbara Yaffe in Ontario, Dr. Jennifer Russell in New Brunswick, Canada's chief public health officer, Dr. Theresa Tam; Dr. Deena Hinshaw in Alberta; Dr. Patricia Daly in Vancouver; Dr. Eileen de Villa in Toronto; Dr. Heather Morrison in PEI; Dr. Bonnie Henry in B.C., Dr. Janice Fitzgerald in NL; and Dr. Vera Etches in Ottawa.



*We'll meet again, Don't know where, Don't know when
But I know we'll meet again some sunny day.
Keep smiling through, just like you always do
'Til the blue skies drive the dark clouds far away.*

Dame Vera Lynn



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