

Our Theme this year:
Strength in Every Story

March 2026

Leadership Circle Members:

President: Christine Pagan president@cfuwpq.ca

Vice President: Di Groffen vp@cfuwpq.ca

Treasurer: Christine Pagan treasurer@cfuwpq.ca

Webmaster: Erin Holmes website@cfuwpq.ca

Club Address: Box 113 Qualicum Beach, BC, V9K 1S7 See: <https://cfuwpq.ca>

Meeting: March 8, Knox United Church 2P – 4P

Program: International Women's Day (open to the public, by donation)

Speaker: Dr. Briony Penn

Program: Artivism: Bringing Art, Writing, and Activism Together for the Salish Sea

What To Look For:

President's Message

Program Poster

Summer Solstice Garden Tour Update

Membership News

A Member's Activity

Scholarship & Bursary Trust

Bookish Things: Book Launch, Book clubs, Book review

President's Message



Wow - our New Members' Tea really was not only a lot of fun, but quite an eye-opener! We have so much talent in our club: our new members and also those members 'of long standing' (not 'old') bring a wealth of different experience and skill sets.

Many of the conversations I had with members at the tea focussed on our club advocacy, and 'what can we do' in Oceanside. At our February club meeting our advocacy chair (VP Di G.) presented us with some hard facts on the homeless issues in our community, and hosted a very open discourse on the situation. Di, and other club members are working with some of the local outreach organizations to assess how and where in the spectrum of issues we can be most impactful; from lack of shelter and crisis care, to affordable housing. Di will be reaching out shortly with opportunities on how we can advocate, both as a club, and as individual members.

Advocacy is about giving a voice to those who cannot speak for themselves, but of course, money speaks too - and every year we help raise funds for Island Crisis Care Society (ICCS), which provides support right here in Oceanside to those experiencing hurt, hunger and homelessness. We walk on the Coldest Night of the Year (CNOY2026) on February 28 - so far, we have raised \$4,300.00, so please think of joining the CFUW PQ Ramblers to reach our goal of \$6,000.00. A huge thanks to those of you who have signed up to walk, or donate to the team. It's a fun walk, but a real reminder of how awful it must be to spend every day, and every night with no warm sheltering home at the end of it.

<https://cnoy.org/location/oceanside>

I hope to see many of you 'Ladies Who Lunch' on February 26, at The Modern in Parkville at 12:30pm, but if not, then I am looking forward to seeing you at our club meetings and

events - particularly, the IWD public lecture on March 08, 2:00pm at Knox United Church, where Dr Briony Penn will speak to us on 'Artivism: Bringing Together Art, Writing, and Activism for The Salish Sea'. Open to the public, so please bring family and friends
Christine

Please visit the website (www.cfuwpg.ca) for more details on all our activities
... and don't hesitate to contact me if you have **questions on anything**, or something to share, good or bad (president@cfuwpg.ca)

Program

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY
Artivism: Bringing Art, Writing and Activism Together for the Salish Sea

Speaker: Briony Penn
Dr. Penn is an award-winning writer, artist, educator, naturalist and broadcaster who has lent her voice to the protection of ecosystems and species at threat in British Columbia. She is a fifth generation settler on the west coast and has raised two boys.

Sunday, March 8, 2026
2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Knox United Church
345 Pym Street, Parksville BC

All welcome
Donations at the door

Summer Solstice Garden Tour Update:

The Summer Solstice Garden Tour planning committee have been unsuccessful in meeting the following timeline; therefore; we recommend the Summer Solstice Garden Tour not occur this year.

July, 2025	12 gardens viewed
August	6 gardens selected; correspondence confirming with home owner
January	emails sent to 6 homeowners asking them to choose gift certificates from local businesses as appreciation for showing garden Volunteers x 2 to go to businesses and pick up gift certificates
February	emails sent to home owners requesting some information on their garden for inclusion on map Volunteer to create map with info on each garden – maps printed
March	volunteers selected to work at each home – three shifts (10am – 12pm; 12pm – 2pm; 2pm – 4pm) x 2 volunteers per shift = 6 volunteers per home x 6 homes = 36 volunteers 12 volunteers selected to check in with local businesses twice a week to sell tickets(maps) for the months of April, May and up to June 19 th and to pick up money
April	6 businesses (2 in Nanoose; 2 in Parksville and 2 in Qualicum Beach) selected to sell tickets (maps)
May	visits to home owners to confirm requirements: table with umbrella and two chairs
June 20, 2026	Garden Tour



Membership News

New Member's Tea

Thirty women came together at Knox United Church on January 25th in celebration of the 13 new members who have joined CFUW PQ since last July 2025. They are: Robin E, Anna T, Kath N, Jacqueline H, Mari Lyn K, Perry P, Colleen B, Sharon R, Shelley P, Dana G, Fern F, Leslie M, Shireen S. Seasoned and new members had a fun time getting acquainted.

(Contributed by Brenda P.)

2026 New Members Tea



(Photographs by June A., photo array created by Erin H.)

News of a Member

This photograph is of one of our founding members, **Eva H., doing what gives her joy** - sharing her love of books at the Coombs Family Day event, and hosting a stand for her Foundation, the **Wonderful World of Books**, which promotes early literacy in SD69, by giving a free, age appropriate, new book a month to preschoolers from Nanoose-to-Bowser-to-Lasqueti (<https://thewonderfulworldofbooks.com/>)

Repeated from a Mid-week Missive by Christine P.



Scholarship and Bursary Trust News

2026 Poster Available for Distribution.

Susan, our publicity chair has created this year's poster outlining all the awards SBT plan to give June 2026.

The poster will be available at the IWD presentation at Knox Church, March 8th as well as the general meeting in April. On reviewing the stats from last year's applicants, all methods of publicity are equally valid, so anywhere eyeballs can see these posters is good.

Submitted Valerie G
SBT Chair



PARKSVILLE QUALICUM

**Scholarship and
Bursary Trust**

AWARDS FOR 2026

Four High School Scholarships of \$2000

Two Memorial Scholarships of \$4000

Two Mature Student Bursaries of \$3000

Two Post-Graduate Awards of \$4000

One Early Childhood Education Award of \$2000

North Island College Trades Award of \$1000

Vancouver Island University Trades Award of \$2000

James Craig Reid Memorial Scholarship of \$4000

For details and application forms visit

<https://cfuwpq.ca/what-we-do/scholarships/>

Applications must be received by May 31, 2026

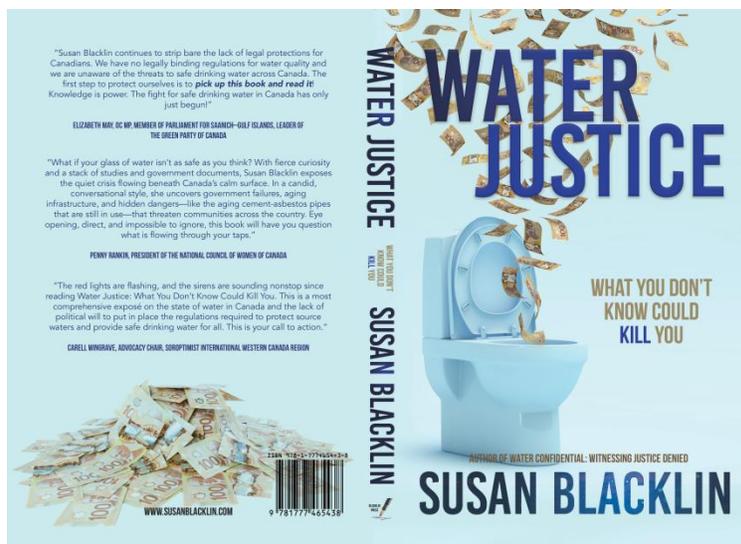


Realizing potential. For all women.



Bookish Things

Book Launch by a member



Sunday March 22nd, World Water Day, is the book launch for CFUW Parksville

Qualicum member Susan Blacklin's second book, *Water Justice: What You Don't Know Could Kill You*, exposes threats to the health of Canadians from Canada's drinking water, revealing government negligence and affecting both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. The book critiques Canada's weak and provincially varied drinking water guidelines compared to other G7 nations drinking water regulations, arguing that corporate lobbyists hold more influence than citizens over water policy.

Blacklin documents political indifference across parties and connects the decline of Canada's water quality to the erosion of our democracy. Highlighting contaminated source waters and inadequate protections, the book calls readers to action, emphasizing that safe drinking water requires citizen engagement to overcome government failure and corporate control.

Visit: susanblacklin.com for more details and other events

Location: The Rotary Hall at 211 Fern Rd West, Qualicum Beach

Time: Doors open 6.30 presentation at 7 p.m.

To reserve your seat, please call Mulberry Bush Bookstore at 250-752-9722 or email them at: BookLovers@MulberryBushBooks.com

QFP (Quality Foods Parksville) Booklovers

We meet upstairs the second Thursday of the month at 7 p.m. Sept. 11 is our first gathering and the book "Always Pack A Candle" is our selection. The remainder of the year is as follows:

- Oct. 9 [The Forgotten Home Child, by Graham](#)
- Nov. 13 [Revenge of the Tipping Point , by Gladwell](#)
- Dec. 11 [Precious Cargo, by Davidson](#)
- Jan.8 [The Briar Club, by Quinn](#)
- Feb.12 [The Berry Pickers, Peters](#)
- Mar. 12 [Walking in Two Worlds, by Kinew](#)
- Apr. 9 [Brother, by Chariandy](#)
- May 14 [All the Quiet Places, by Isaac](#)

(Contributed by Dianne A.)

Shrinking Violets Book Club

Tuesday, January 27, 2026

Theme: Vive La France

- Bauby, Jean-Dominique. *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly*. 1997
- Colette. Various titles including *Gigi*. 1873-1954.
- Huggan, Isabel. *Belonging: Home Away from Home*. 2004.
- Kuper, Simon. *Impossible City: Paris in the 21st Century*. 2024.
- McLain, Paula. *The Paris Wife*. 2012
- Perrin, Valerie. *Fresh Water for Flowers*. 2018.
- Watanabe, Kiriko & 3 others. *Emily Carr Fresh Seeing –French Modernism and the West Coast*. (4 essays.) 2019.

(Contributed by Noreen B.)

Book Review of the Month

The Paris Express (2025) by Emma Donaghue

You have probably seen this title on bestseller lists and you may have read a review. You are likely aware of Emma Donaghue's previous work. Well, she does it again and in a rather unique way. One of the reviews says the book is propulsive and that is the perfect description. The pace plunges along. It barely draws breath. Somehow, your breath and heart begin to thud along with the engine's pounding noise.

The book is based on fact. On October 22 of 1895, there was a Paris Express that travelled from Granville in Normandy to Montparnasse, in Paris. It departed at 8:30 AM, made a few brief stops and is set to arrive in the district of Montparnasse at 4PM. As it arrived, the train derailed, burst through the station wall and hung partly suspended over the street below. A woman selling newspapers on the Place de Rennes beneath the broken locomotive was killed, but no one else died (except for a man who collapsed, overcome by the sight). Ask Google: "train derailment 1895" to see the picture for yourself. The basis for the story will satisfy the history buffs among you. In addition, the setting will interest you. Not only do you learn a great deal about keeping a steam engine fired to an appropriate degree and you will better understand the intricate dance of the driver and stoker "because both speed and safety depend on the two knowing each other like catcher and flier on a trapeze." Beyond the mechanics of driving a steam train on an express run, you will better understand the life of fin-de-siecle (pronounced faun-duh-seekluh), meaning end of the century) France and the wider general interest in industry and innovation.

To bring that society to life, Donaghue took the names of real people of that time and place who could have been on that train (of the just more than 110 passengers and crew), that day and gave some of them habits, clothing, professions, jobs, connections. She says, "A railway carriage is as intimate as a dinner party, but one with no host and guests assembled at random." One woman whose ideas add to the propulsive energy is that of a young anarchist who has brought a bomb on board and plans to detonate it to cause the maximum amount of damage to the first-class carriages near to her second-class compartment. Anarchists were not uncommon at the time and there was resentment lodged against the upper class, privileged people who ran the country and all the companies. Yes, they may be driving progress such as motion pictures and the Paris underground railway, but at whose cost? Many ordinary people resented the luxury on display and the privilege asserted. Donaghue had three classes of travel to populate with every sort of person, from member of the government, to an oysterwoman selling her wares. The passengers come from a worldwide span of different faiths and colours,

training, inclinations, sexual preferences, professions, and habits. Certainly, it is easy to blur the people whose names are known (even if little else) and those with whom one comes to know, including the pregnant women close to her birth date, not to mention the political activist.

This book is well-designed to satisfy both those who prefer their history double-verified in archives and those who are satisfied by a well-researched and carefully portrayed vision of a historical circumstance. The way the author created this allows you to construct a complex mental map of an entire society of the time. It is a somewhat unique occurrence to find and enjoy, like a mosaic. Climb aboard the express train for an unforgettable ride.