



Our Theme this year:

Strength in Every Story

April 2026

Leadership Circle Members:

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

Meeting: April 13, 2026 6:30 for chat, 7:00 at Knox United

Program: Discuss National Resolutions, followed by business meeting

Speaker: Leadership Circle and members

Program: Resolutions

What To Look For:

President's Message

Program, Information on Resolutions, Information on Nominations

IWD event

Anniversary Notice

Membership News

Global Outreach Notice, Aldea Maya News

Invitation to an Event

Book Sale Workers

Forward House support

Bookish Things: Book clubs, Book review

President's Message



March sure is a fun month - the celebration of International Women's Day on March 08 is certainly something I look forward to. This year was no exception, as we hosted the delightful Dr Briony Penn who entertained us with her stories, and beautiful watercolour and pen & ink illustrations documenting her journey from childhood to the present day, as a 'difficult woman'. What a great epithet - Difficult Women Get Things Done!

It got me thinking about all of the women in our club who '**Get Things Done**' difficult or otherwise: from those who advocate for or help the homeless and low income families in our community trying to make ends meet; those volunteering in local community kitchens, substance abuse venues, and mental health centres; others who volunteer in initiatives to encourage and assist childhood and adult literacy; those standing up to raise awareness on preserving our coasts and old growth forest, or access to safe and reliable drinking water; and last but not least, those who are caring for family members or friends, across the generations. There are so many more examples of the work we do - as advocates, activists, carers - and if I had to name anyone, you'd probably all be named more than once ...you know who you are . . .

March 08 is not just International Women's Day, **every day is International Women's Day** - hats off to all of you!

Christine

Please visit the website (www.cfuwpq.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@cfuwpq.ca)*

Program

Resolutions: there are two CFUW National Resolutions this year. We will study them as a club at our general meeting on **Monday April 13**, but prior to that, there will be an opportunity to study and discuss them on **April 08** at the home of one of our members. Further details to follow.

(Contributed by Mary Ellen C., as is the following information)

Resolution #1, 2026

CANADIAN RESPONSE TO THE EDUCATION CRISIS IN AFGHANISTAN

Proposed by CFUW-Ottawa

RESOLVED, That CFUW urge fellow Canadians and governments at all levels to strengthen strategic partnerships with networks in both Afghanistan and the Afghan diaspora so as to amplify their voices in support of the women and girls in Afghanistan.

RESOLVED, That CFUW urge the federal government of Canada, in collaboration with other nations, to increase support for international justice mechanisms and to hold the Taliban accountable for their violations of human rights.

RESOLVED, That CFUW urge national and provincial governments, in accordance with Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy, to increase their support for women and girls in Afghanistan by removing barriers for Afghans at risk who wish to pursue their education in Canada, and by funding or continuing to fund online learning and virtual teacher-training programs.

BACKGROUND

This resolution proposes that CFUW uphold the rights of women and girls in Afghanistan and raise awareness of their unique educational challenges.

The Current Situation for Women and Girls in Afghanistan

In August 2021 Taliban forces took total control of Afghanistan, reinstating the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, banning education for girls beyond grade 6 in September 2021, and imposing harsh "morality" laws, severely restricting the rights of women and girls. In December 2022 the *de facto* government banned girls from tertiary education. The option provided for girls is religious schools (*madrassas*) teaching fundamentalist beliefs. By 2026, the bans on university and secondary education for women and girls are projected to increase child marriage by 25 per cent, increase childbearing among adolescent girls by 45 per cent, and increase maternal mortality by at least 50 per cent. The current

context in Afghanistan has triggered an acute mental health crisis among women and girls, who report rising levels of anxiety, hopelessness and despair. (UN Women, 2025).

Today, Afghanistan stands out tragically as the only country in the world where secondary and higher education is strictly forbidden to girls and women. Nearly 2.2 million of them are now barred from attending school beyond the primary level due to this regressive decision. (UNESCO, 2025).

Afghans Support Education - In a nationwide, door-to-door survey of more than 2,000 Afghans, 92 per cent said it was “important” for girls to continue their schooling, with support cutting across rural and urban communities. (UN Gender Alert 29 August 2025)

Education is a Human Right - Education was formally recognized as a human right by the United Nations on December 10, 1948, with the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Article 26 of this foundational document declares that everyone has the right to education, including free and compulsory elementary education.

Education is an Obligation under Islam Law - All Muslim-majority countries have condemned the Taliban *de facto* regime as being un-Islamic in their unique interpretation of the Koran. Islamic scholars affirmed that women possess the same rights as their male counterparts to education at any age, level, or field of study and that this right is rooted in the fundamental Islamic obligation of seeking knowledge, which applies equally to both genders in accordance with Islamic teachings. (Muslim World League Jan. 11-12, 2025 “Girls Education in Muslim Communities: Challenges and Opportunities”, Islamic Scholars Section.)

Afghan Women and Girls in the Context of the United Nations

The right to quality education (Sustainable Development Goal 4) and gender equality (Sustainable Development Goal 5) are fundamental. (UN Economic and Social Affairs, n/d). The current Taliban régime in Afghanistan, which began in August 2021 after the American military withdrawal, deprives its female population of those human rights. For 20 years prior to the Taliban takeover, women were doctors, legislators, teachers, and lawyers and education was accessible to women. Over the past 5 years, the Taliban has enacted countless edicts, and directives which confine women to their homes, eliminate learning opportunities, restrict their opportunities for employment or gatherings within their communities, and silence their voices.

In December 1979, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (UN Women, 2000-2009). By ratifying the Convention, as Canada did in 1981, member states condemn discrimination against women in all its forms and commit to combatting discrimination against women in public and private spheres. In 1989 Afghanistan also signed the CEDAW convention, and completed ratification, “without reservations” in 2003. (UN CEDAW, 2025)

Afghan Human Rights and Democracy (AHRDO) is one of the many organizations documenting the Taliban’s crimes against humanity. Although there is no universally accepted count of the Taliban’s edicts, UN Women, AHRDO and other groups report over 100 unrepealed restrictions on Afghan women since 2021. The requirement to be accompanied by a male chaperone to any destination results in profound psychological distress. Women have been prohibited from most workplaces, which deepens their financial insecurity and increases their vulnerability to violence and exploitation. Bans on women entering public parks, gyms, beauty salons and other services have pushed them into social isolation.

The introduction of the “Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice Law” (PVPV) in mid-2024 brought the control over the lives of women and girls to an unprecedented level, creating fear among women not only for themselves but also for their families. (Femena, 2025).

The most recent example of ongoing harm by the Taliban was in January, 2026, when they formally enacted a new penal or criminal code that effectively legalizes and dramatically weakens legal protections against violence toward women, including domestic violence by husbands.

Arrest warrants have been issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for Taliban leaders for their “alleged persecution of women, girls, and gender nonconforming people”. (Human Rights Watch, July 2025)

Canada’s Role in Defending the Rights of Afghan Women and Girls

In September 2024, Canada and 25 other nations announced a joint statement regarding the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, holding Afghanistan accountable under CEDAW for systematic discrimination and violations of women’s rights (Global Affairs Canada, 2024). Continued international advocacy and civil society engagement is part of the process of building a legal case under the treaty that could ultimately lead to a case before the International Court of Justice.

A priority of Canada’s Feminist International Assistance policy is that “Canada is committed to [...] a truly feminist approach that supports the economic, political and social empowerment of women and girls, and makes gender equality a priority, for the benefit of all people.”

Elizabeth May, Member of Parliament for the riding of Saanich-Gulf Islands, presented a petition to the House of Commons (House of Commons, June 2025) calling on the Government of Canada to support recognition of the systemic discrimination against women and girls under Taliban rule as a crime against humanity.

The petition was responded to on August 20th, 2025 by Rob Oliphant, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The government’s response affirmed concern and action on rights violations but stopped short of endorsing formal criminalization of “Gender Apartheid” under international law because that concept had not yet been legally codified.

Of note is that since late 2024, formal negotiations by member states of the United Nations have begun to create the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes Against Humanity, a new multilateral treaty. The process is expected to take several years. If adopted, there would be obligations for member states to prevent those crimes, criminalize them domestically, and cooperate in extradition and prosecution. Gender Apartheid could be included and recognized as one of those distinct crimes against humanity.

Such international legal actions are important, but the timeline for their completion is a long way off, and the women and girls of Afghanistan continue to suffer tragically.

Despite the severe trampling of their human rights, and the dramatic worsening of their personal circumstances, countless women and girls in Afghanistan continue to pursue online courses, in the hope that some day, the Taliban forces will no longer rule their lives.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS FOR THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT

- 1) Canada must increase its efforts with international partners to enforce sanctions against individual members of the Taliban leadership, especially their right to unfettered travel, to emphasize disapproval of their treatment of women and girls.
- 2) The Canadian government should increase humanitarian aid and open the doors to young Afghan women who are offered scholarships in Canada; the denial of study visas condemns female students to a life of oppression.
- 3) Global Affairs Canada should continue funding of alternative education for Afghan women and girls, and should support NGOs that offer virtual teacher training, digital literacy, and access to online learning platforms.
- 4) In their transfer payments to the provinces for post-secondary education, the Canadian government should earmark funds for colleges and universities to create and maintain online educational programs for students in Afghanistan.

RELEVANCE OF THIS RESOLUTION TO CFUW

CFUW's national advocacy priorities are Education, Equity and Social Justice and Safe and Healthy Communities.

In 2003 CFUW adopted the resolution proposed by its International Relations Committee entitled "Women: Essential to Peace", resolving that "the Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) urge the Government of Canada to continue to support Canada's implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, Women, Peace and Security, and to provide sufficient funding to further its work and facilitate regular meetings and consultations towards fully implementing UN Resolution 1325 in Canada, and encouraging and assisting implementation in other countries and protecting women and girls from gender-based violence".

"Education is a basic human right and is a steppingstone to other fundamental human rights." (UNESCO, n/d). In 2015 CFUW adopted a resolution to advocate for the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). SDG 4 is "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong opportunities for all."

CFUW's motto is "Realizing potential for All Women" and CFUW's vision is that "Women and girls are educated and empowered to make transformative change in the world". CFUW's mission is "To achieve educational and economic equality and social justice through continuous learning and empowerment". The motto, vision and mission particularly apply to Afghan women, Afghanistan being the only place in the world where education is currently denied on the basis of gender. This policy and the removal of women from important positions in their communities has had a devastating effect on the economic and social fabric of Afghanistan.

CFUW has long been concerned with the education, equality, and well-being of women and girls worldwide, as witnessed by its yearly statements to the UN Commission on the Status of Women on issues of gender equality. In March 2025, at CSW69, one of CFUW's recommendations to the UN was to increase investments in education in crisis zones and fragile states, with a focus on innovative and technology-enabled approaches to education.

Through CFUW-Ottawa's UWHAW group, in partnership with Right to Learn Afghanistan, CFUW members are already assisting with remote, "technology-enabled approaches to education" for young Afghan women.

In January 2025, CFUW sent a letter to Immigration Minister Marc Miller protesting about the denial of permits for Afghan women to study in Canada (CFUW 2025).

IMPLEMENTATION

CFUW clubs could:

- Raise awareness in each CFUW community of the lack of education available for girls in Afghanistan and the edicts/abuses of the Taliban;
- Locate and provide support for families in Canada who have relatives in Afghanistan
- Encourage Afghan women in Canada to speak at CFUW meetings;
- Demonstrate with Afghan women on special occasions such as: International Women's day, International Human Rights day, 16 days of Activism to End Gender Based Violence;
- Start a study group to understand the realities and complexities for women and girls living in Afghanistan;
- Find resources to enhance understanding of the current situation in Afghanistan, such as the journal Zan Times;
- Establish connections with CFUW-Ottawa UWHAW and Right to Learn Canada;
- Refer to the "Higher Education Toolkit" from Right To Learn Afghanistan (see [Higher Education Campaign – Right to Learn](#));
- Meet with elected officials and Senators to encourage them to support UN organizations providing humanitarian aid, education, and health care in Afghanistan
- Meet with the leadership of local universities and colleges to urge them to extend educational programs to students in Afghanistan, particularly through technology-enabled systems;
- Write to the Federal Immigration, Refugee and Citizen department to request that they prioritize Afghan refugees and students;
- Keep current with developments at the UN Security Council and the International Criminal Court specific to Afghanistan.
- Use local media to increase awareness of the circumstances of women and girls in Afghanistan

Resolution - Countering Disinformation in Canada

Club Name(s)/National Committee Names(s)

CFUW Guelph

Club President/National Committee Chair(s)

Acting President Gwen Revington

Proposers of the Resolution

Kate Ciceri, Liz Fisk, Andrea Horton and Lyn McLeod, CFUW Guelph, Advocacy Group

Resolved Clauses

RESOLVED, that CFUW urge the federal government to develop and implement stronger regulation of social media platforms to require them to be accountable for (a) disinformation on their sites and (b) for implementing mechanisms to limit the circulation of such disinformation and to report that disinformation to users.

RESOLVED, that CFUW urge provincial governments to develop, as part of the school curricula on media literacy, mandatory course material for each school grade

(Kindergarten through to Grade 12) that is specifically focussed on disinformation and its dangers.

RESOLVED, that CFUW urge all levels of government to develop extensive information awareness campaigns to educate the public on the dangers of disinformation, how to recognize it and confirm the validity of the information that is found on social media platforms.

RESOLVED, that CFUW calls on all levels of government to continue to fund and support legacy broadcast and print media to ensure reliable information sources remain available.

Background

Definitions:

Disinformation is false or misleading information deliberately spread to deceive or to secure economic or political gain and which may cause public harm (Wikipedia).

Misinformation refers to inaccuracies that stem from inadvertent errors (Wikipedia).

Introduction

Democracy in healthy societies requires a shared understanding of basic facts and confidence in key institutions. Disinformation destroys that shared understanding and impacts all individuals in Canadian society. The Canadian Communication Security Establishment (CSEC) has identified that Artificial Intelligence (AI) plays a key role in political disinformation attacking political figures (CSEC Update, 2025). AI's ability to create fake information opens the door to new challenges in addressing disinformation. The Commission for Canada's Foreign Interference states that disinformation creates distrust and division and poses a significant threat to our democracy (Public Inquiry into Foreign Interference in Federal Electoral Processes and Democratic Institutions, 2025). A recent Leger poll indicated that over 75% of Canadians believe that disinformation influenced the results of our recent federal election (Martin, 2025). In a recent CFUW Guelph survey, 96% of respondents stated that they believe that disinformation poses a serious challenge to society in general. 98.4 percent had concerns about disinformation impacting numerous areas including climate change, health and our world order (CFUW Guelph Advocacy, 2026). The World Health Organization has declared addressing disinformation as a key priority (Kleiner, 2025). The World Economic Forum Global risk report (2024) identifies disinformation and the technology that spreads it as a major global threat to the economy and to democracy. Disinformation threatens our public health and safety, climate change action and our very democracy.

Public Health and Safety

The Canadian Medical Association (CMA) is seeing a direct link between disinformation and negative health outcomes (CMA, 2025). Disinformation has led to vaccine hesitancy (Denniss & Lindberg, 2025) and to some Canadians disbelieving established public health knowledge. Timothy Caulfield, director of the Alberta University's Health Law Institute, is concerned that there has been an ongoing erosion of trust in matters of scientific health consensus creating a knowledge crisis in which disinformation is dominating (Caulfield, 2025; McMaster, 2025).

Climate Change

The World Economic Forum (2024) labels climate change as an extreme threat and most likely to create a crisis on a global level. The United Nations Development Program [UNDP] (2025) has stated that climate change disinformation can undermine public trust in climate science, delay policy response and polarize public discussion. Such tactics can include presenting only partial scientific information, promoting pseudoscience or amplifying conspiracy threats (UNDP, 2025). Climate change policies remain one of the most intensely debated and polarized issues in Canadian politics.

Impact on Democracy

Disinformation can affect democratic processes calling into question the integrity of our elections and the results (Silver, 2024). False media content mimics legitimate news (Martin, 2025). Both male and female politicians receive online harassment, however disinformation attacks against female politicians tend to be more personal and sexist in tone (Wong, 2024). Research suggests that a significant impact of gender-based disinformation is the ability to limit the involvement of women in politics and their overall success in the political arena (Seidel, 2021; Politics News, 2024). Therefore, online spaces are becoming increasingly toxic for female politicians (Ulrich, 2024).

Disinformation also amplifies differences in public opinion and can encourage hostility towards 'other' groups undermining our democracy by polarizing Canadians and targeting the social cohesion and trust that makes public debate and democracy possible (Martin, (2025)). When the public is susceptible to disinformation it can create group-based fear and resentment eroding trust in public institutions (Hogue, Lavallée & Fung, 2025).

The Impact and Responsibility of Social Media Platforms

Social media websites, including Meta (Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Threads and Messenger), Tik Tok, Google, YouTube and X, are key platforms that effectively fuel disinformation. Using trolls, bots, false identity accounts, paid accounts and extremist influencers effectively increase the volume of disinformation online. Disinformation creates doubt and confusion, political polarization and distrust in key institutions leading to major societal harm (Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, 2024). A 2024 article by the government of Canada indicated that 44% of Canadians get their news from social media and 53% of Canadians get information from close contacts. Among the four in five Canadians (83%.) who do not regularly fact check, 50% of those lacked interest in doing so (Bilodeau & Khalid, 2024).

Platforms reward disinformation postings that elicit fear, shock, and anger by encouraging greater engagement in the form of higher numbers of likes, comments, and re-shares. Algorithmic bias is based on a user's online interactions, in turn creating echo chambers. (Echo chambers are groups where the same ideas are shared repeatedly without question or analysis). Social media platforms are also financially incentivized (Diaz Ruiz, 2023). The greater the engagement through provocative disinformation postings the greater the income. Posts that contain disinformation receive higher levels of engagement and spread more rapidly and reach more users than truthful posts (Denniss & Lindberg, 2025).

Social media tech giants have shown little commitment to content moderation or self-regulation. Historically, responsibility for fact checking has been extremely limited. Currently major social media platforms take no fact-checking responsibility for their sites. They dismiss any tools that might mitigate disinformation on their platforms, and they flaunt authorities who attempt to regulate them or hold them accountable (Denniss & Lindberg, 2025). Fines that are issued have a negligible impact financially; as well, the major tech owners often threaten to withdraw services. Owners, knowing they profit from disinformation show little or no inclination to address this issue that threatens Canadians both at home and globally (Denniss & Lindberg, 2025 and Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, 2024).

The Canadian Context and the Need for Further Action

Although Canada is continuing to develop legal and institutional interventions to combat the issue of widespread media disinformation, additional tools are needed to effectively address this threat. The Report of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage referenced major social harms from unregulated social media platforms, including the impact of disinformation. Among its numerous recommendations, they indicated a strong need for the federal government to regulate tech platforms (Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, 2024). Recently, the Federal, Provincial, Territorial (FPT) Information Regulators concerned about the destructive impact of disinformation, have called on the Canadian government to: support media pluralism, to provide funding to ensure that institutions have resources to run their access transparency programs, to enhance digital media literacy and to regulate online platforms (Information Commissioner of Canada, 2025).

It is important that disinformation education becomes part of school curriculum in both elementary and secondary grades. Education is considered a key component when combatting the complex risks and destructive impact of disinformation. Finland has demonstrated how effective this intervention can be, creating a successful multi-pronged, cross-sector educational approach that reaches citizens of all ages (Mackintosh, 2019). Although education is a provincial area of responsibility, there is also a role for the federal government to play. As stated by S. Hogue et al (when addressing education and disinformation) "... the federal government could work with the provinces and civil society to create a general framework that could be adapted to the local particularities of each educational curriculum (Hogue, Lavallée & Fung, 2025).

The Centre for International Government Innovation (CIGI) has addressed the need to identify Canada's susceptibility to disinformation. It calls for a proactive response, recognizing the urgent need to educate and encourage Canadians of all ages to critically assess the information they consume. It has determined an urgent need to invest in local media, independent investigative journalism, and the development of digital sources that reflect a uniquely Canadian perspective. It further emphasizes the need to develop an advanced monitoring response system, which continually assesses the digital landscape and stresses the necessity to hold online media accountable for the proliferation of disinformation (Padalko & Fitz-Gerald, 2025).

The European Union's collective action against disinformation has proven that serious and effective regulation of disinformation is both possible and enforceable. The EU has developed tools to analyze and mitigate the impact of disinformation. The EU has enacted laws that shift responsibility onto digital providers to regulate their own platforms, with noncompliance leading to fines up to 10% of the platform's global income. The EU has provided a working model, which treats disinformation as a systemic risk and uses strategies to regulate the platforms that enable it (*Digital Services Act*, 2023).

It is essential that both the Canadian public and the Canadian government continue to address the destructive impact of disinformation by initiating interventions that will effectively address this existential threat.

Implementation

Nationally, CFUW could:

- Advocate and urge the federal government to develop and implement regulations that would hold social media platforms responsible for the disinformation on their sites.
- Advocate and urge the federal government to develop and promote education materials on disinformation, its dangers and how to confirm the validity of information found in the public domain.

- Advocate and urge the federal government to provide financial support to legacy broadcasting institutions and to mainstream and print media.
- The National Advocacy group could establish a virtual repository to record the actions taken by all levels of CFUW with respect to this Resolution and the results of those actions. The repository could then serve as a resource for all levels of CFUW with respect to potential implementation measures.

At the provincial level, Provincial Councils could talk to legislators about:

- Developing, as part of the school curricula on media literacy, course material that is specifically focussed on disinformation, how to recognize it and its dangers.
- Providing financial support to legacy broadcasting institutions and to mainstream and print media.

Locally, CFUW Clubs could:

- Meet with local Members of Parliament to urge them to persuade the federal government to create regulations that would hold social medial platforms responsible for the disinformation on their sites and its identification and removal.
- Meet with local Members of their Provincial Legislature and advocate for the development of media literacy programs focussed on disinformation, as part of the school curricula.
- Meet with local Members of Parliament, members of the Provincial Legislature and with municipal councillors and discuss the need to support legacy broadcasting institutions and mainstream and print media.
- Ahead of municipal, provincial, and federal elections, develop questions for candidates concerning the issue of Disinformation.
- Encourage CFUW members to learn about disinformation risks and ways to counter them.
- Within CFUW membership raise general awareness of the issue of Disinformation by offering workshops and/or speakers on the issue.
- Work together with other local groups interested in raising awareness about the dangers of disinformation and promoting steps to reduce its spread.
- Gather and produce educational materials on disinformation for members, interested local organizations and for the public.
- Collaborate with other CFUW clubs to develop Webinars, workshops and other learning activities that will inform members about disinformation.
- CFUW Guelph will develop a petition to be adopted and circulated at a local, provincial and national level.

Nominations Process



Every year, CFUW Parksville Qualicum members are able to vote for candidates who have been nominated for election to the CFUW Parksville Qualicum Leadership Circle. The new Leadership Circle will assume office at the AGM in June. The Nominations Committee invites nomination applications for all Leadership Circle positions.

For clarification, all Leadership Circle positions are considered vacant, as the term of office of the current Leadership Circle members is one year. This means that every candidate for a position, even if she is currently a board member and would like to continue in her current position, must be nominated for the office.

Leadership Circle members who are elected at the 2026 AGM serve until their successors are elected at the 2027 AGM.

Interested? Needing more information?
Contact Mary Ellen, Chair of Nominations Committee
mecampbell@shaw.ca

International Women's Day



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

Upcoming Anniversary

Remember 1981? Where were you when Prince Charles and Princess Diana exchanged vows? Where were you when CFUW Parksville Qualicum held their first meeting? 45 years have gone by since those momentous events.

Ready to celebrate the club's 45th anniversary? Mark your calendar - Tuesday, June 9th - more details to follow.



(Contributed by Sheila R. and Mary Ellen C.)

Membership News

Ten members attended the drop-in gathering at Serious Coffee on March 17th. There was much “wearing of the green,” lively conversation and laughter. I was well on my way home before I realized I had not captured the fun in photos.

Remember you don't need to tell anyone you are coming - just show up at 2 pm at Serious Coffee, on April 21st at 2 pm for some “good craic” as the Irish would say.



(Contributed by Brenda P.)

Global Outreach

...looking for new group members...

CFUW-PQ currently supports 3 educational efforts in global outreach:

1. Aldea Maya assistance for Mayan families in Guatemala, sponsoring one 3rd year nursing student and one 2nd year middle school student.
2. CHES (Citizens Historical Education Society), providing direct financial assistance to one high school student in Tanzania.
3. GHAZI DIL (developments in literacy) elementary school in Pakistan, donating every year to the library which services the school and the community.

Catherine K. and Wendy R. have guided this group for many years, and we thank them for all their efforts. We are now currently looking for new group members as Catherine and Wendy step back from leading the group. Please consider joining, whether you have experience with global outreach or not, as this group plays an integral part of our club.

Contact Erin H. at 250-752-1467 or erinholmesnolan@gmail.com.

And, speaking of our overseas initiatives, please see the following on Aldea Maya.

(Contributed by Erin H.)

Aldea Maya News

Combating Malnutrition in the Guatemalan Highlands, by Louise Sosa

For close to two decades, Aldea Maya has been working on projects to fight malnutrition in Guatemala. We have nutrition and cooking classes with the children at the Chuk Muk elementary school. Another project we have is nutrition and cooking classes with a family member of the middle school children. We have divided these moms (plus grandma's and a dad) into 2 groups: those with children under 5 and those with children over 5 years old. We do this because we have 2 different programs, each with it's own cook book pamphlet. In this cycle we had classes for 36 families.

The infant cook book and nutrition program focuses on when to eat solids and how much to feed the child. As well as how to feed infants and children healthy foods

economically. We also focus on what not to feed children which is a huge problem as mostly processed chips, candies and soda pop drinks are readily available in the village. We also focus on making complete protein using vegetable and grain sources.

Our second cook book focuses on introducing locally grown greens into the diet. We explain why greens are important for protein, vitamins and minerals. We also inform the parents on the role each of these nutrients plays. One of our main focuses is on chaya: an incredibly healthy leafy green that can easily grow as a bush. Each family receives a chaya plant to grow at home.

Every class ends with a cooking class and a group meal.



(Created by Louise S., forwarded by Val G.)

Fun and Elegant Event



*"My idea of good company is the company of clever,
well-informed people who have a great deal of conversation"*

Jane Austen, Persuasion

Please join the CFUW Jane Austen Reading Group
For Brunch and Conversation

The Grand Hotel, 4898 Rutherford Road, Nanaimo

Sunday April 26, 11.30am

RSVP Mary Dobson

marydobson1@gmail.com

(Contributed by Val G.)

Book Sale Update

The book storage locker is a great hive of activity. Our bees are busy collecting, sorting, boxing, and stacking large direct donations as well as donations through the box at Save-on-foods. A big thank you to everyone helping with the book sale in all the different ways that make the honey.

Joan, our very hardworking queen bee, shares their "at work" photos. By mid-March **over 200** Banker Boxes filled.



Brenda



Dana and Anna



Anna and June



Sheila and Vicky



Deb



Di



Introducing Farraz,
our hired helper
extraordinaire,
here with Sheila



Joan and Anna

(Contributed by Erin H.)

Cheering Forward House



These are the baskets that went to Forward House for Mar 17, celebrating St Patrick's Day, assembled by our own Lorna M.

Bookish Things

QFP (Quality Foods Parkville) 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

February 24, 2026, Theme: Italy

- Di Lampedusa, Giuseppe. *The Leopard*. (New Translation by Ralph Nisbet) 2025
- Giannone, Francesca. *The Letter Carrier*. 2023
- Leon, Donna. *Aqua Alta*. 1996.
- Leon, Donna. *Death at La Fenice*. 1992.
- Leon, Donna. *My Venice and Other Essays*. 2013.
- Mayes, Francis. *Bringing Tuscany Home*. 2004.
- Price, Steven. *Lampedusa*. 2019.
- Serle, Rebecca. *One Italian Summer*. 2022.

(Contributed by Noreen B.)

Book Review of the Month

Theo of Golden (2023) by Allen Levi

One day, a well-dressed, quiet older man comes to stay in Golden, a small city in the Southern United States, in Georgia. After getting to know the town a bit, he approaches a man who is a discreet financial representative for certain people and arranges to rent his third-floor apartment on the main street. He leads a quiet life, buying coffee in a popular coffee shop, sitting on a bench near the fountain, and walking along the river.

When he notices that the coffee shop displays over 90 pencil and charcoal portraits of townsfolk by a local artist, he begins a practice of buying portraits and making arrangements to meet the subjects so he can present them with their likenesses. Most often, that leads to a conversation and an acquaintanceship. Gradually, Theo (for that is the only name he offers) becomes one of the town's most welcome newcomers. He quietly does what he can to help those who are troubled, with no recognition for his generosity. And he meets a wide variety of people. Amongst his acquaintances are a janitor, a cellist, a bookseller, a homeless woman who

stays in a shelter sometimes, an accountant, a barista, and so on. Of all the townsfolk he meets, there is only one he definitely does not like. He understands that people may be puzzled or suspicious of his intentions, but conversation usually overcomes reluctance. His insights into the personality of each person he meets lead to their revelations about how and why their lives have become what they are. He meets the artist and is able to express his admiration for his skill. We follow Theo as he gets to know the townspeople and the city. Everywhere, he becomes known as a good man, who spreads fellowship and generosity and admires natural beauty and in turn, the town improves and becomes a kinder place. I luxuriated in the good feelings that provokes. Is simple human kindness and understanding is the answer to all that troubles us? One hopes so.

Not everyone in the reading world agrees. Some feel that the goodness is pure Pollyanna and unrealistic. Perhaps. Some criticize the fact that Theo is a devout Christian. Why does that matter? Despite that, it has one of the highest ratings I've ever seen on Goodreads. With some justice, a reviewer feels the plot sags because we know Theo has a secret and it is quite a long bit of story until we find out what it is. If I have a quibble, it is the unusual rhythm. There is a long happy, uplifting, satisfying story of people being and becoming their best selves and I loved that. Then, suddenly, after a celebration of music and community, we have a traumatic event that leads to us finding out who Theo is and why he is in Golden. It is a surprise but in the end, we believe (or at least hope) that the town can recover and continue. Besides all that, I loved learning about why port wine is distinctive, because Theo is from the Douro region of Portugal, originally. (He had been living in New York before he spent time in Golden.) It was also good to better understand the American South, which is sometimes seen as racist, violent, and small-minded.

If nothing else, we can emulate Theo's open-mindedness and focus on the happiness and wellbeing of other people. We can help make our communities better places to live. We can appreciate the natural beauty around us by just stopping and looking. We can recognize artistic and musical talent and give it a helping hand by appreciating it. We can ease the burdens of those who have been affected by misfortune. And each of us can try to be our best selves by identifying what holds us back. This book shows the way to be kinder, more ready to notice and help where we can. Call it inspiring.