



**GENERAL MEETING - Tuesday, May 3, 1:00 PM on ZOOM**

**Diana Pepall, will tell us about *The Code Breaking Unit in Sandy Hill during World War II.***

**Diana is the Library Manager, Collections Branch , Ottawa Public Library, City of Ottawa.**

## **TACKLING THE ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS TOGETHER WE CAN**

***“Never in my wildest dreams”*** wrote Susan Russell as she thought back to the events that led to the Webinar series in April 2022. It started with concern about pollution from single-use plastic. Was this problem addressed in CFUW policies? Could the advocacy committee draft letters? No, a new resolution was needed, so Marilyn Letts and Susan Russell teamed up - researched single-use plastic pollution in Canada and drafted a resolution. Marcia Armstrong and Joan Conrod added their edits, presented it to the Club and submitted it to CFUW National. The resolution became CFUW national policy at the AGM in 2021.

Lively discussion in the Club around the plastics problem brought together a group of members keen to keep the conversation going and to take action. They formed an **Environmental Action Group** within the Club. They had so many great home hints and information about environmentally friendly products, and how to refuse, reuse, recycle that they offered to share these with the whole club; ***“The Green Grapevine”*** became a part of the CFUW Nepean monthly newsletter.

As is so often the case, one good idea spurred on another. Let’s put together a public event to raise awareness in the community not only about plastic, but other environmental issues as well. Why not time it to be near Earth Day in 2022? Sounds straightforward – how hard can it be?

Spearheaded by Marcia, the Ottawa and Kanata Clubs quickly partnered with Nepean and formed an organizing team by September 2021. Originally the group hoped for an in-person event but as the specter of Covid continued throughout the fall, they shifted to an online program. While that meant they could not have some of the fun face-to-face activities, it opened up the event to a wider audience.

Lots of questions: how many evenings? what should be the focus? who should they get as speakers? As the ideas evolved and shifted, the goal never changed. The organizers knew that people felt overwhelmed by environmental problems and wanted to know what they could do. This event would focus on solutions, real steps people could take, so that attendees would leave feeling motivated and empowered to take action. Hence, the title was born: "Tackling the Environmental Crisis: Together we can!"

The energy, commitment and enthusiasm of the organizing committee meant there was no shortage of ideas. It was a great experience to work with members of other clubs – hear about their interests and activities, learn from their events. It became a productive and supportive group. When there was work to be done someone always stepped up to take it on.

When it came to a budget, the organizers had committed to holding the event at no cost to local CFUW Clubs. And then, even before the plans were fully organized, Councillor Kavanagh offered financial support as did MPP Joel Harden and CFUW Ontario Council.

The modest budget could only go so far, but the speakers all agreed to reduce their usual fees significantly – it was a delight to offer this suite of eminent guests.

With the three-evening event planned, the next thing was publicity – posters, web pages, emails, mailing lists, exploring Eventbrite. Each time a member of the team spoke up to take on the task even if they had no experience (yet).

And then there was the Webinar software experience – learning how to make this work was a bit of a challenge. How to get presenters appear at the right time, at the right place with shared screens, how to get the recording organized and how to make and run polls? There were practices with the team, practices with the speakers and then everyone held their breaths as the event approached.

Then organizers watched the registration numbers – what if no one was interested? Imagine their delight when the registrations grew right from

There were back-up moderators, back-up questions, and back-up computers just in case technology failed – a few type A personalities in action. But each night aired without incident – no power failures, no Zoom glitches, no lost guest speakers – wonderfully uneventful from that perspective.

A flurry of activities made the Webinars possible, and these practical elements gave very valuable experience. Committee members were challenged to try new things while they worked with a superb group of supportive, insightful and productive women.

However, it is the impact of the Webinar series for the attendees that is a key question. Over 560 people registered and over 200 attended each evening from across Canada, as well as in Australia, the US and the Philippines. The questions were lively and thoughtful, the guest speakers shared their advice graciously and honestly. Feedback has been extremely positive: the YouTube videos are increasingly in demand; other Clubs asked to share the series; some attendees have written to us with specific steps they plan to take, or a new way they are looking at what they can do to make a difference.

Consider just one evening in the series. If each person who attended mentioned the ideas they heard to five others, and they in turn pass them along to only one person, that extends the reach of our Webinar information to over 2000 people in addition to the attendees. That becomes an additional reach of over 6000 people for the three evenings.

“Never in my wildest dreams” – one idea about plastics that translated to a national resolution, triggered an action group and sparked a Webinar series on the environmental crisis that brought together three local clubs, engaged around the world and touched viewers across Canada and beyond.

Imagine where we might go with the next idea??

### **THE WEBINARS - BY THE NUMBERS - statistics:**

1. **568** (different) people registered for at least one evening
2. **218** people registered for all three evenings, and 89 attended all three
3. **163** attended at least 2 evenings
4. **147** registered for at least one event but did not attend any of the evenings\*
5. Webinar #1 Rebecca - 354 registered, **237** attended
6. Webinar #2 Diana - 394 registered, **261** attended
7. Webinar #3 Seth - 368 registered, **218** attended
8. Many people have viewed the recordings: on YouTube The count on April 27:

Webinar #1 Rebecca 88 views,

Webinar #2 Diana 169 views,

Webinar #3 Seth 80 views

\* Editor's comment: sometimes people register for an online event they can't attend so they will receive notice of where they can watch the recording later.

**Please share this video from City of Ottawa compost processing with others.**

<https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/1625520195788/>

## Heard it through the Grapevine....

“Do what you can, where you are” “Consume less” “Speak up” “We need bold leadership”

*Tackling the Environmental Crisis: Together We Can ( April 6, 13, 20 2022)*

- Rebecca Prince-Ruiz “Plastic Free” (April 6, 235 attendees, recording <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tgBUyCOKeNM> );
- Diana Beresford-Kroeger in conversation with Bill Steer “To Speak for the Tree” (April 13, 259 attendees, recording <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ErPwncR17ol&t=1208s> )
- Seth Klein “A Good War” with Sabah Ibrahim on the Ontario Climate Emergency Campaign (April 20, 216 attendees, recording <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UAdgNwpY2BY> )

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, organized citizen can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has”

Margaret Mead

Thank you to Beth Junkins for this detailed report of the club’s advocacy and action on Single-use Plastic Pollution and Tackling the Environment



## COMMUNITY SERVICE Betty Ann Grainger

In spring Club members help to replenish Interval House’s supply of diapers and wipes for families sheltering there. Sizes 5, 6 and pull-ups are needed.

Members may shop for diapers and deliver them to Betty Ann’s house or donate money by e-transfer. It is too late to mail a cheque as the delivery to Interval House will be in early May.

Thanks to everyone for supporting this community service.

**Social Media -** sharing, networking and informing

<https://www.facebook.com/CFUW.Nepean/>.

Facebook, LinkedIn and

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/cfuwnepean/>

and our really great website

[www.cfuwnepean.ca](http://www.cfuwnepean.ca)

and **Ontario Council**

[www.cfuwontcouncil.org](http://www.cfuwontcouncil.org)

and **CFUW National**

[www.cfuw.org](http://www.cfuw.org)

**Graduate Women International**

[www.graduatewomen.org](http://www.graduatewomen.org)

email CFUW Nepean News Bytes at : [CFUWNepeanNews@gmail.com](mailto:CFUWNepeanNews@gmail.com)

**The Nepean News Bytes team - Marilyn Letts and Susan Russell**

**CFUW Policy Book** copy and paste :<https://www.cfuw-ottawa.org/resources/Documents/Issues%20and%20Advocacy/Policy%20Book%202018-2019.pdf>