



UPCOMING MEETINGS

Tuesday Feb 7, 2022, 1PM – 3PM **Via Zoom**

Guest Speaker Dr Magda Havas on Electrosmog and 5G Towers

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The President's Message

I like to learn! I enjoy the challenge of trying something new, of, when asked, being able to say "Oh, yes, I do that." Learning keeps my brain alert and alive.

It is a good thing that I do like learning because being president of CFUW Nepean has presented me with a huge learning curve. I have been president of groups in the past - in my church, in the schools in which I taught - but none of them offered the challenge that this job has.

I had attended a few meetings before I was asked to become VP (I am a traveler!) and, just as I became VP, COVID hit, and many things went by the way. Now, with in person meetings and regular activities, I am overwhelmed with things to learn. Did we, in the past two years, have a Budget Committee, an AGM, a Bylaws and Constitution Committee? If so, how did I miss that? Too busy trying to master other aspects of the job!

Learning is easier when one has good teachers, and I thank so many of you for being just that. I also thank all of you for your patience, which I hope will be ongoing!

Joan

Members Corner

Each year we get to learn a bit about our new members, but we thought it would be fun to get to know more about our continuing members. We asked Dolores Dufresne to tell us a bit about herself, what brought her to the CFUW, why she stays involved in the CFUW as well as a few “whimsical” questions – to give us a bit more insight

Dolores Dufresne

I have been a member of CFUW Nepean for about 23 years! I joined shortly after moving here in 1999. This is the longest that I have ever lived in one place. For the previous 30 years, I lived mostly outside of Canada due to the fact that my husband worked for what was then called External Affairs. It was perfect for me – I like history and I love to travel. Except for Ankara, Turkey, we lived mostly in the United States (Washington, D.C. twice and Philadelphia) and in Europe (Paris, Athens, Ankara, and Madrid plus a short stay in Port-au-Prince, Haiti).

I am originally from the United States where I got my BA degree in elementary education. I taught third grade until our first child was born and we started moving overseas. We have two daughters – our older one and her family live here in Kanata and our younger one married a Frenchman and lives in Lyon. Three of our grandchildren whom we haven't seen in person for 3 ½ years are there. Luckily, we have two other grandchildren that live here.

I enjoy belonging to CFUW Nepean and I have held several Board positions over the years. I also belonged to the Ottawa Club for many years. I actually joined both Clubs at the same time. The Nepean Club appealed to me because I lived in Nepean and I thought that it would give me the opportunity to meet ladies living in my area. After joining CFUW, I appreciated the advocacy work that the clubs engage in and, of course, the scholarships and bursaries that are given out each year. Since joining, I have attended most of the Ontario Council Annual General Meetings and several National AGM's. I almost always find the speakers and workshops interesting and thought provoking. I would urge all of you to attend one of these gatherings, if you get the chance.

I look forward to being active in our Club for several more years to come!

What super power would you like to have? To be able to bring peace to the world and to eliminate world hunger and poverty

If you could visit another time, would you like to visit the past or the future? The past – perhaps high school years, knowing what I know now !

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up? A teacher

If you could un-invent something, what would it be? guns

The Gender Imbalance in Maths and Science and Why it Matters

-Jennifer Robinson, Carla Barry & Beth Junkins

The United Nations has declared February 11 to be [the International Day of Women and Girls in Science](#), to promote the full and equal access and participation of females in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields.

Women make up about 47% of the total workforce, but they remain statistically underrepresented in STEM. According to recent data from Statistics Canada, 34% of Canadians with a STEM degree are women, but they make up only 23% of Canadians working in STEM careers. There has been progress, particularly in the biological sciences, however the proportions lag in areas like engineering, chemistry, physics and mathematics. For example, according to [UNESCO \(2022\)](#), there are wide regional differences, with some Arab and Latin American states having the highest proportion of female engineering graduates (over 40%) while countries like Australia, USA and Canada still struggle around 20%.

Why do women and girls not go into STEM fields?

- Societal messaging that girls don't go into science, especially math intensive sciences.
- Unconscious biases in parents and teachers, *expecting less* from girls *and not supporting/encouraging* STEM directions (especially where parents have not had positive experience with STEM themselves).
- Teaching approaches and assessment methods in the teen years that resonate with boys more than with girls.
- Classroom dynamics – females are sometimes uncomfortable in a male-dominated classroom because of inappropriate behaviour, bullying or patronizing.
- Parents and teachers may not know what career opportunities exist in STEM.
- Girls may not have the knowledge and information to allow them to make important choices such as subjects, programs, educational institutions, and part-time employment in STEM fields. Co-op and summer employment and volunteer programs can increase their knowledge and provide important experience to help them in decision-making.
- Perception that careers in STEM for women are not conducive to work/life balance, that supportive maternity leave may not be available, and that careers may be negatively impacted by maternity leave. Some leave STEM careers having experienced discriminatory hiring/career development practices.
- Few role models or mentors to answer questions and provide encouragement and guidance.
- Changes in girls' self perception and loss of confidence in their own abilities, particularly between primary and secondary school where girls demonstrate loss of confidence in math and sciences, and growing math anxiety.

Why should women and girls go into STEM fields?

There are many advantages for women and girls who study STEM and pursue careers in STEM fields.

- Enables them to follow their natural interests and aptitudes, realize their potential, lead lives in evolving fields that bring them joy, fulfillment and lifelong learning.
- Develops critical thinking skills that they will have for their lifetime, and use in whatever field they choose – science, law, medicine, teaching, politics, policy development, business, music, and many other fields.
- Provides high earning potential that leads to economic independence and gives women options for work/life balance.
- Provides opportunities such as travel and collaborating with people in many different fields.
- Enables them to have a bigger role influencing decisions, to contribute to improving the world in so many areas and to be part of something bigger than themselves, to help address some of the biggest challenges the world faces today – things like water scarcity, plastic packaging, and climate change.
- Provides opportunities for expanded and higher-level work such as program analysis, policy development, high-level decision making, and management. There is the potential to influence policy at the national and international levels and to help make a difference in the world.
- Builds confidence and self worth.
- Provides a cutting-edge career path that can include not only today's jobs, but also jobs that don't even exist yet. The world is changing at a fast pace. In the past decade enormous industries such as cryptocurrency and social media have emerged from almost nothing. It's estimated that 80% of jobs in the future will require technical skills.

Why should we at CFUW Nepean care?

A goal of CFUW is to advance the rights and status of women and girls.

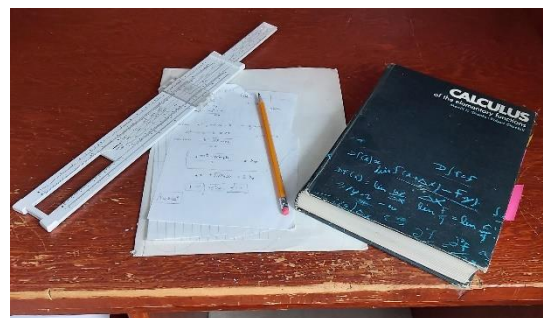
- It is a basic human right that every person should be able to follow their dream, to be the person they want to be, and to realize their full potential. Gender should not limit the growth and development of women and girls around the world.
- Society loses valuable intellectual diversity. This affects what is studied, how it is studied, perspectives, and approaches to analysis.
- Gender imbalance in STEM fields reflects significant underlying root causes such as unconscious biases and prejudice. These have larger societal consequences that go beyond STEM and need to be addressed.
- Gender imbalance in STEM limits the ability for women to get to the table to address issues like climate change and take a bigger role in decision making. These issues differentially affect women and there is growing awareness that female perspectives bring innovative approaches.
- Gender imbalance in STEM promotes the status quo in the education system so that the existing teaching approaches continue and perpetuate the unconscious biases that limit growth and development.
- There is economic loss for women when career paths are stifled, and economic loss for nations when 50% of the people are not allowed to contribute fully.

What can each of us do?

- Talk to our daughters, granddaughters, and all young women.
 - encourage them to go into STEM programs
 - be alert for math anxiety, discouragement, and early signs of difficulties, and offer to help
 - encourage trying out STEM programs through summer camps (GirlSci for example), Coop programs
 - listen, provide guidance, and share our experiences, failures, and successes
 - be mentors to girls and women, stand up and speak up
- Talk to our sons, grandsons, all young men.
 - be alert for perceptions around girls, “nice handwriting so she can write the notes”, “not for girls” and discuss it
 - be open to talk about the rights of girls, and appropriate behaviour for boys
- Support the CFUW Nepean Scholarship program that will give young women financial help to enter STEM fields, especially fields that are non-traditional for women.

Reflections on Women and Girls and Science

Editors note: We asked two of our members who pursued science and engineering to reflect on women in science as they looked at their own life journey.



(Picture used with permission B. Junkins)

Carla Barry

I had a wonderful science related career. What attributed to my success?

I was the daughter of poor Italian immigrants who encouraged and supported me to go to university in whatever field I was interested in. I went to an all-girls high school in Sault Ste. Marie. I had a couple of excellent teachers who answered my many questions after physics and chemistry classes and encouraged me to take science. The debating club gave me the lifelong skill of effective communication. There were no boys to compete with or to be intimidated by in the science and math classes.

In grade twelve I was hired by Environment Canada to work in the research lab for the summer. That work experience helped me choose a university education in science. I was hired for two more summers. One of those summers I worked in Quebec, where I basically had six weeks of intensive French language training as all the other students were Francophone.

I went to the University of Western Ontario and got my BSc in chemistry. I was one of two women of the 30 students who graduated. Most of the chemistry and physics professors and tutorial leaders were supportive. The only negative experience I had was in the applied math class. I was the only

female in the class and the professor and other students often made me feel uncomfortable with inappropriate innuendos etc.

After graduation, I was offered a job in a research lab at Agriculture Canada in Ottawa. For years I was the only female chemist. I got my bilingual status early in my career with little training. I loved to learn and through the competitive process was promoted and worked in many different labs and advanced in management. However, it was an old boy's network and men promoted men. When I appealed a competitive process the judge of the tribunal ruled in my favour declaring that I didn't get the job because I was a woman. Later I had a mentor, a senior manager who liked my work and supported my career development. I used my science background and communication skills to further my career. I was fortunate to represent Canada at conferences, meetings and trade negotiations in over 16 countries Over the years I had to deal with some instances of harassment, prejudice, and bias. I didn't let it keep me back.

Jennifer Robinson

I grew up as the daughter of an air force sergeant who was both a jet mechanic and a radar technician, so I have always had an interest in all things technical. I'm the first in my family to go to university. I was very fortunate to have the extraordinary opportunity to learn computer programming in high school in 1968. I was also very fortunate because I always had excellent teachers, from kindergarten through graduate school.

Choosing a career in engineering enabled me to follow my innate interest in how things work, and my aptitudes for problem-solving and logic. My choice was unconventional for a woman in the 1970s. I was the only woman among 86 engineering graduates at Carleton University in May 1975. I began working full time in 1976 and completed my Master of Engineering degree at Carleton in 1977. I had a fulfilling and interesting career in both the private and public sectors and was able to pursue my passion for lifelong learning.

My career spanned many areas of information technology. I began with semiconductor electronics and moved into software development, requirements analysis, process improvement, project management, and technical writing. I met many amazing people who were very kind and taught me so much along the way. Some of them became my good friends. I'm thankful for all of it and wouldn't have missed any of it for the world.

Not to paint too rosy a picture, I sometimes encountered sexism, verbal harassment and microaggressions. I didn't let these deter me, and in some cases I was able to point out and change these behaviours. I hope that with changing attitudes, these issues will not exist for future generations of women in STEM.

What did the GWI do in 2022

At the United Nations??

- ~ submitted **6 written statements**
- ~ invited to cosponsor **10 NGO written statements**
- ~ UN reps submitted **9 advocacy reports**
- ~ produced **3 Commission on the Status of Women (CSW66) parallel events** on Climate Crisis and Education; Young Women and Climate Action; Women & Corruption

In Advocacy??

- ~ published **6 international advocacy toolkits** around menstrual hygiene, world youth skills, International Day of the Worlds Indigenous peoples, literacy, the girl child

In the Young Member Network (YMN)???

- ~ members from **20 countries**
- ~ created videos for International Day of Education & the International Day of Women and Girls in Science
- ~ participated in conferences on sustainable development, Geneva peace week
- ~ organized **7 YMN** monthly conversation series to explore cultures, friendships, build connections

Under their projects and programs???

- ~ **\$18,000** raised for Girls Education for Brighter Futures
- ~ **3 new young women** joined teachers for Rural Futures programme
- ~ **> 2,000 women & girls** directly benefit from the Bina Roy Partners in Development projects in Egypt, Ghana, Nepal and Uganda

The 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals – A GWI Outreach Conversation

March 24, 2023 at 12 noon ET

Co-Hosted by **CFUW Nepean** and the **Turkish Association of University Women**

Guest Speaker Dr. Basak Ovacik of the TAUW Istanbul Branch; lecturer in Gender Studies at Bahceschir University, Turkey



(Picture used with permission GWI)

The SDGs are a call for action to promote prosperity while protecting the planet i.e. ending poverty must go hand-in-hand with strategies that build economic growth and address a range of social needs including education, health, social protection, and job opportunities, while tackling climate change and environmental protection.



(Graphic from GWI website)

CFUW National

(www.cfuw.org)

POLICY and RESOLUTIONS

- Susan Russell

Editor's note: Soon we will be asked to review and vote on proposed resolutions from CFUW clubs across Canada. We asked CFUW Nepean member Susan Russell to provide some insight into the process

CFUW National has been advocating since the 1920s. Its public policy positions and advocacy are based on resolutions that come from the grassroots (individuals in your Club) and are determined by the eligible voters at the national AGM (Your Club President carries your vote at the National CFUW AGM).

The resolution process is an opportunity for members rally around issues with international, national, provincial, and local impact.

WE CREATE RESOLUTIONS TO:

- Seek positive change
- Address current issues
- Give direction and focus to advocacy
- Engage and educate members from coast to coast and beyond
- Further the work of CFUW in the public arena
- Fulfill the CFUW goal to be a women's organization that effects positive change.

Volunteers, committee members and others identify issues, share knowledge and advocate at every level. When CFUW adopts a resolution at the AGM it becomes CFUW policy. There is a CFUW Policy Book online www.cfuw.org . Clubs

contact local MPs, MPPS, local organizations and the city, the Provincial Council contacts the Provincial Government and National contacts the Federal Government about adopted CFUW policies.

“**Proposed Resolutions**” refers to those documents that will go forward to the AGM. If adopted by the Voting Body, they become **CFUW Policies**. All proposed resolutions are discussed at the Club level before going to the CFUW AGM.

ACTIONS:

- Contact elected officials (Legislatures, Parliament, city), like-minded organizations.
- To use as a foundation for briefs and other hearings
- Forward for adoption at our international body (Graduate Women International) for advocacy in other countries

Proactive: bring an emerging issue to the fore.

Reactive: Support or change legislation. e.g. Support for Gun Control, Health Care, Pensions, peace or can offer guidance to policy makers – resolutions on childcare, refugees, violence against women

FIRST STEPS: Identify the Issue

- Is there CFUW Policy on this issue?
- Is it a local, provincial, national, or international issue (Jurisdiction)
- What do you want done and how do you want to do it?
- Who will it help? Women? Education? Other focus?

Any Club member or committee can propose an issue/resolution, but it must be consistent with the purposes of the Club and of CFUW and the Club must support the final version.

CFUW Ontario Council

Speaker Series: The Affordable Housing Crisis: Two working Solutions

Speakers: **Robert Cikoja**, the Chief Executive Officer of Habitat for Humanity Huronia and **Melissa Scott**, Operations and Development Manager for Barrie Housing

February 25, 2023, 10 AM – 12:30 PM
via ZOOM

The presentation is free but registration is required in advance

For more information and to register, go to <https://cfuwontcouncil.org/standing-committees/>

Ontario Bill 23 Advocacy

There have been questions and concerns raised by some individual CFUW members in the Ottawa area about the environmental impacts of the recent Bill 23 “More Homes Built Faster Act”.

CFUW Ottawa prepared a letter that Ontario Council sent to the Premier advocating that the Bill be reconsidered and rescinded. You can read the letter at

<https://cfuwontcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Bill-23-CFUW-Ontario-Council-Letter-2022-12-15-signed-1.pdf>

CFUW Nepean Activities

The Coldest Night of Year Walk – February 25

CFUW Nepean once again has a team walking on The Coldest Night of the Year – February 25 – in support of **Cornerstone Housing for Women**.

Those who participated last year enjoyed a pleasant walk through Westboro on a Saturday morning, stopped for a coffee at Bridgehead and then walked back to our starting point.



(Picture used with permission M. Armstrong)

Last year’s Nepean Cold Walkers - Marilyn Letts, Marcia Armstrong, Charlotte McWilliam, Carla Barry & Marlene Patrick.

If you want to join the team, contact Marcia Armstrong. You can also sign up or donate online to the team or individual team members at: [CFUW Nepean Cold Walkers \(e2rm.com\)](https://e2rm.com).

CFUW Nepean Activities

Dec 6 2022 General Meeting Camp Woolsey – Emma Kent

-Marlene Patrick

Emma Kent, the President of the Ottawa Historical Association provided us with a thoughtful review of Camp Woolsey. She is also the co-author of a Camp Woolsey history, along with Julia Côté.

For over 80 summers, from 1937 to 2019, women and girls enjoyed camping experiences and made lifelong friendships at Camp Woolsey, which was a wonderful Girl Guide Camp near Dunrobin, Ontario.

The camp is named after Major Edgar Charles Woolsey and his wife Mary, who like many Boer war veterans, became involved in the Scouting/Guiding movement.

The Woolseys first supported camping for Girl Guides by allowing them to camp on their cottage property on the Quebec side of the Ottawa River. Later they were instrumental in identifying the future camp property, a farm near Dunrobin ON, backing on the Ottawa River.

The Camp was purchased through fundraising efforts such as the sale of donuts (even the Ottawa Mayor at the time bought a dozen donuts) and funding from Ottawa residents and businesses. Camp Woolsey was first established in 1937, and officially opened on July 6, 1939.

The first priority was to turn the farmhouse into a hospital. The second was to reforest the land through many tree-planting bees on the farm, including the planting of seedlings contributed by the Ontario Government. (The seedlings

originally planted in the 1940's were red pines, with an 80 year lifespan so many were cut down by the time the camp closed.)

One special visitor to Camp Woolsey was Princess Alice in July 1940 wearing her scouting uniform. However, during the remaining war years, the camp did not operate for several summers. In 1948, the chapel was rebuilt reflecting a closer connection to religion than held currently.

In the 1950s, numbers of Guides increased. Camp Woolsey benefited from a 7 -year relationship with the West Ottawa Lions Club who brought electricity in the camp, supported improvements to the hospital roof, modernized the camp hospital and built a cabin for the young Brownies.

In the 1960s, two new campsites and the Centennial Boathouse were built as growth continued. In 2002, the camp adopted a mascot known as Rosie the Raccoon. The full-sized Rosie costume was designed by a person associated with Jim Henson's Muppets, and the copyright was given to the camp. Interestingly, in 2008, a B-movie horror film was filmed at the camp!

By 2017, major renovations were needed, and upkeep was expensive, so Guiding Ontario made the difficult decision to close the camp.



While 2020 had been planned to be the last camping summer, the pandemic changed those plans to Zoom campfires aired for devotees.

(Picture used with permission B. Junkins)

CFUW Nepean Activities

Nov 29 2022 Christmas Celebration – Amica

-Joan Conrod

Ingredients for a successful Christmas party? Fun, friends, and food! All three of these we had in abundance at Amica on November 29

Twenty-nine of us gathered IN PERSON at 491 Richmond Road, and were heartily welcomed by the Amica staff. We had a cosy and lovely dining room for our personal use, a perfect venue for us to chat, to introduce ourselves to each other, to share friendship together.

The food, with several choices for each course, was delicious, and served buffet style so we could sample everything (which, I confess, I did). Could any lunch be better?

Just our getting together and enjoying the lunch would have made the party a success, but Amica then added more - three rounds of "You Be the Judge". What fascinating cases! What interesting discussions developed! How our attention was caught and held! What fun that was!

A wonderful Christmas party indeed! Thanks to Sue Carter for arranging it, and for knowing what would suit CFUW Nepean best, what would send us home with Christmas joy in our hearts.



(Pictures used with permission CFUW Nepean members)

Jan 10 2023 General Meeting Endangered North Atlantic Right Whale by Dr. Brenna Frasier

-Kim Stewart

On January 10, 2023, we had the privilege of having a zoom presentation as well as a question and answer period regarding the endangered North Atlantic Right Whale. The session was led by Dr. Brenna Frasier, the Curator of Zoology at the Nova Scotia Museum.

Dr. Frasier is a biologist and molecular ecologist whose research has largely focused on using DNA analysis to examine the history and conservation of species. She has over 25 years of experience on a number of projects, including those involving whales. Dr. Frasier obtained both her undergraduate degree and PhD from Trent University.

CFUW Nepean Activities

Endangered North Atlantic Right Whale (cont'd)

Dr Frasier is dedicated to communicating science in new ways, including leading camps for teens, producing field guides on a variety of marine mammals and speaking to diverse audiences, like the CFUW. She told us that even as a young girl, she had always been attracted to whales and dolphins and in university, while studying English and Biology, she hoped there would be a way to combine these two passions and become involved in education and outreach.

The sheer size of this whale is stunning, 50 feet long and weighing over 50 metric tons. Although similar to the Bow Head Whale, scientists are able to identify the North Atlantic Right Whales by their V-shaped blow and the unique crusty patterns on their bonnets. Some can be seen off the coast of Newfoundland, near Belle Isle in the summer as well as increasingly in the Gulf of the St. Lawrence River, near Cape Cod and in the Bay of Fundy. The North Atlantic Right Whales typically spend their winters off the coasts of Georgia and South Carolina.

Sadly, they are critically endangered, with currently just over 300 remaining. There are various reasons for this including ship strikes, entanglements in fishing equipment, contaminants, changes in their habitat (due to the lobster and crab fisheries) and extremely low reproductive rates.

Historically, the North Atlantic Right Whale was favoured by whalers as they have a thick layer of blubber, they are relatively slow moving and they float after they have been killed.

Scientists are studying them using a variety of methods, including collecting whale blow (DNA), tracking them through dogs trained to detect their excrement and passive acoustic surveys. These all allow scientists to focus their research efforts and thereby analyze the health, locations and patterns of the remaining North Atlantic Right Whales.

Dr. Frasier recognized that it can be difficult balancing the needs of the often hard-hit fishery

industry with the endangered status of the North Atlantic Right Whale. There have, however,

been a number of recent collaborative examples between the fishing industries and the managers of the North Atlantic Right Whale population such as reducing speeds and fishery closures when whales appear, and use of improved rope that more easily releases when the whales become entangled.

(Picture used with permission B. Junkins)



Upcoming Speakers

Feb 7, 2023 1PM Via Zoom – Dr Magda Havas (Trent University): the Effects of Electrosmog and 5G Towers

March 7, 2023 1PM Via Zoom – Ottawa Shelter Movers

March 8, 2023 7PM Via Zoom – Kelly Favro: Sexual Assault and Publication Bans

April 4, 2023 1PM Bells Corners United Church – Peter Hum (Ottawa Citizen Restaurant Critic): How the Pandemic has Changed Restaurants and Their Critics

CFUW Nepean Activities

The Scholarship Trust - Closet Clearout for the Trust

-Marcia Armstrong

Thanks to the generosity of the CFUW Nepean members and their friends, the Closet Clearout for the Trust was a huge success. We delivered **1605 lb of soft goods and 577 lb of hard goods** to the Value Village. That should bring in **about \$300** for the Trust – and give a 2nd life to clothes and household items, keeping them out of landfill.

Many members pitched in. Some drove around the city picking up donated bags from across the city over the past two months. Others were there on Jan 25 to help unload the Dymon storage locker into the truck for delivery.

Thanks to everyone who contributed and helped! A special thank you to Dymon Storage who donated 4 lockers for our use and a truck to transport everything to Value Village. We couldn't have raised any funds without this critical donation.

(Pictures used with permission M. Armstrong)



CFUW Nepean Book Group

– Valerie Burton

Our book group is meeting via video for the months January to June on the 4th Tuesday at 1pm.

Our 'format' is flexible. A volunteer member shares a short review of the book and any interesting 'tidbits' - sometimes about the story, sometimes about the author – and occasionally recommends a video (usually YouTube)- perhaps an interview with the author.

Books are chosen on a yearly basis – before we 'break' for summer in June – (we do not meet July/August/December).

Members suggest titles, we vote, and books are chosen accordingly. Topics are wide ranging and member votes are our only 'selection' device!

Some members borrow Library books and some purchase them, but there is lots of sharing in order that everyone has access to the title.

Our discussions can be wide ranging and usually interesting – participation is encouraged!!

If you are a 'reader' or would like to be please join us. Call member Rosina and she'll add you to our list!

Booklist for January to May 2023:

January – The Diamond Eye ..K Quinn

February – Palace Papers .. T Brown

March – Department of Rare Books and Special Collections ... E Jurczyk

April – Five Little Indians ..M Good

May - The Henna Artist .. A Joshi

THE GREEN GRAPEVINE - Plastic Wrap Confessions

-Beth Junkins

Our household has been trying to reduce our plastic use for a while now. We had given up plastic straws, plastic utensils, plastic bags and, inspired by the CFUW Nepean plastic resolution, we had taken a hard look at our blue bin to see what plastic we could target to reduce further.

Then, one day while wrapping up leftovers, I was stuck by the amount of plastic **not** going into my blue bin – bread bags, bagel and wrap bags, and one other thing in particular - plastic wrap. I used a lot of plastic wrap: covering turkey leftovers in the fridge, wrapping up ½ an onion, using it in the microwave to keep the gravy from splattering. A few seconds of use and then, without a thought, into the garbage. I was learning that this plastic wrap ended up in landfill basically forever, breaking down into smaller and smaller pieces of plastic entering the water ways, as well as into our food, animals and humans.

I felt I wanted to make some changes, but this was going to be tough – I like plastic wrap. Things stay fresh, it is convenient, and flexible – and it has so many uses outside the kitchen, like wrapping paint brushes between uses and keeping silverware untarnished.

Step 1, I took the roll of plastic wrap out of the kitchen drawer so that each time I went to use it I had to try to find an alternative. Those first few days were awkward, but I began to find replacements. Parchment paper and wax paper are both compostable and work well in the microwave, fridge and the freezer (sometimes with an elastic band rescued from broccoli). In other cases, bees-waxed sheets can cover bowls, then be washed and reused (I must admit that I struggle a bit to get them to stay on properly – more practice is needed).

But could we do something about those other plastic food bags that were going into the garbage? We have found that the resealable tortilla and naan bags have so many uses, replacing commercial plastic bags completely. They are ideal to cover odd-shaped dishes in the fridge, store muffins, cookies, cut veggies in the fridge, or for freezing tomatoes, herbs and beans from the garden. They can be washed and reused lots of times, making a conversation starter as they dry on your counter!



Great in the freezer



Artfully drying on the counter – a conversation starter



Covering odd shaped dishes

So, it isn't perfect, but we keep trying. Though, from time to time, I really miss my plastic wrap.

(Pictures used with permission B. Junkins)

CONTACT INFORMATION

CFUW Nepean website – <https://www.CFUWNepean.ca>

CFUW Nepean social media -

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

– LinkedIn www.linkedin.com/company/67676158

– YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCmEVH4VhblGQNW0kXT41e1A>

CFUW National website – <https://www.cfuw.org>

GWI Web site – <https://graduatewomen.org>

CFUW Nepean email to contact the Webmaster – CFUWNepeanPR@outlook.com

CFUW Nepean email to contact the Editor of NewsBytes – CFUWNepeanNews@gmail.com

CFUW Nepean membership form – <https://tinyurl.com/CFUWNepeanMembership2022-23>