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SISTER CLUB NEWS

SCN - ISSUE 1 - JANUARY 2021

Friendship through Understanding... Understanding through Education and Friendship



KIM RIEDEL
WCI PRESIDENT 2019-2021

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members,

We begin this edition of Sister Club News still in the global pandemic. Yet despite it, the mission of our organization continues strong. The WCI learning-organization-model occurs across several platforms where information exchange occurs between physical biennial conferences and meetings. Because our clubs share a similar mission and have similarities in structure, programs and outlook, we have created a distinct community where we also share similar challenges. The solutions to the challenges we face are found within our community and cannot be solved externally. WCI brings club communities together to share ideas and solutions, fulfilling the unique mission of our organization. With that in mind, we learn together, support one another, grow together and move our clubs forward collectively in friendship with like-minded women.

I want to thank Sister Club News Editor, Rihab Ouri and Copy Editor, Lea Hesse, for their time and talent in creating this edition. Sister Club News also allows us to execute our mission's education element by sharing know-how and information. I would also like to thank our member clubs for their willingness to continue communicating with our community. The combined ideas of member clubs create a global tapestry of friendship, understanding, and education.

Despite the global challenges, we are changing our societies through bridges we build between all women based on friendship. I hope you enjoy this edition, find additional ideas, and are inspired by the many ways we express peace to change our world for the better.

In gratitude,

Kim

WCI NEWS

On June 24, 2020, the United Nations' Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) adopted the recommendation from the Committee of Non-Governmental Organizations to grant a Special Consultative Status to WCI.

Our deep and sincere gratitude goes to WCI Founder's Representative Eshrat Demougeot for her vision for WCI, to Past WCI President Maria Fernanda Arduino for making it happen, to President of the International Council of Women and Welcome to Korea Dr. Jungsook Kim for her advice and expertise, to Past President of Welcome to Taipei Athenia Kuo for her generosity and friendship, and to all who helped WCI achieve the status.

Read the featured article about WCI's path to Consultative Status written by Eshrat Demougeot on page 24.



Save the date! On March 8th, International Women's Day, WCI will celebrate women with a webinar featuring two female experts in their fields – Diversity Strategist Nicola Byok from Germany and Danielle Robertson from the US Institute of Peace. The topic is "Women, Diversity, and Peace."

The webinar is open to **all** Sister Clubs and their membership. Please join us!! For more information, see March 8th Webinar flyer on page 26.

More Upcoming Events

In April, WCI will host a webinar to focus on WCI's Education Initiative. Guest Speaker Ina Ghaznavi-Collins will talk about how education is transforming the global society.

* * *

In May, WCI will be celebrating its 35th Anniversary! The Anniversary team is already busy planning for this momentous occasion.

* * *

All Sister Clubs and their members are invited to both webinars. We will keep you updated as more event details become available.

EDITORS' ZONE

SCN Editor
RIHAB OURI

Copy and Design Editor
LEA HESSE

Dear Honorable friends,

Praying for all of you a better 2021! Sincerely wishing you & our region peace, good health, happiness & everything you need in your life to be successful for our families & communities.

Warm Regards,
Rihab Ouri

Dear Ladies,

Welcome to the January 2021 issue of the SCN. For this issue, Clubs not able to meet because of the pandemic were given the option to submit other club-related materials in lieu of club activity reports. As an example, AGIWA submitted a very moving short story by member Susan Lau.

The club reports showcase how smart, imaginative, generous, talented, and resilient our community is. Hope you enjoy this issue.

Warm and safe wishes,
Lea

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ANGLO - GERMAN INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

THE TIME BETWEEN THE YEARS - A True Story



In Germany they call it *die Zeit zwischen den Jahren*, those days between Christmas and New Year. The old year is all but over, the new one yet to come. Time hangs suspended, time out of time, and never more so than in 1999 as the world held its breath, waiting for a new millennium to dawn.

From my kitchen where I was preparing dinner, I could see into the living room where Jim and Lilian were sitting on the sofa, holding hands. Jim, my father, was eighty-four and Lilian must have been at least eighty, but she said a lady should never mention her age. My mother had died after long years of illness, not an easy time for my father who had cared for her devotedly. Six months after her death he had met Lilian, a widow living in the retirement flat above his own.

Lilian reminded me of my mother in that she rarely stopped talking. In the car she would tell you amazing things like who invented the cat's eyes in the road, or that you were passing the church where Byron was buried. Jim loved her lively chatter, and her bubbly sense of humour brought a smile to his face that I had not thought to see again. When we asked him to our home in Germany to celebrate Christmas and the Millennium, it was natural that Lilian should be invited too.

I put the dish into the oven and joined them in the living room. While I was pouring glasses of sherry, I caught them exchanging glances.

"Lilian has something to ask you," my father said.

"I was wondering, if it's not too much trouble and you haven't got anything else planned," Lilian began tentatively, in the manner of a woman who had always put her late husband's wishes and then her sons' about a thousand miles before her own. She paused, and Jim squeezed her hand in encouragement. "I have a pen-friend whom I've had since I was a girl. She doesn't live far from Hamburg. I'd love to go and see her while we're here." She looked up at me hopefully.

"Of course," I said. "Where does she live?"

"In a place called Tönning on the west coast of Schleswig-Holstein. About an hour and a half by car from here," Jim answered. He had clearly had the map out.

"Sounds like a nice trip for you all." My husband had entered the room. "I'll stay here and hold the fort. See to the dog and all that," he added congenially. I knew then who would be driving.

"Tell us more about your German pen-friend," I said to Lilian when we were seated at the dinner table. "When did you last see her?"

"I didn't," she replied. "That's the point. We've never met, and she isn't German either. She's Estonian, and her name is Dagmar, though I always call her Teddy. We got each other's addresses through our schools when we were twelve years old. She wanted to practise her English and we've been writing to each other ever since."

"But why haven't you ever met?" I asked.

"Our paths just didn't cross. There was the war, and of course travel hasn't always been as cheap and easy as it is now. But I suppose the main reason is that we both loved writing letters. I think it's an art that's dying out nowadays. Phone calls aren't the same, so we've never spoken on the telephone either. Through our letters we've become very close and shared each other's lives though mine was very dull compared to hers. My parents were poor, but I had a normal, happy childhood. Dagmar's father was a director of the Tallin opera house, but when she was a baby, he was murdered by the Bolsheviks. Her mother brought her up alone."

"And you never wanted to see each other in seventy years?" I felt I had to find out more.

"We made a pact we'd never meet. We felt we were sisters in spirit, and wanted to stay that way."

"What has made you change your mind?" I asked. "Perhaps Dagmar will be upset if you break your agreement now."

Continued below

"I've thought about that, but I'm so worried that something has happened to her. She hasn't answered any of my letters this year. I wrote to Hans in October, but he hasn't replied either."

"Hans is Dagmar's husband?"

"Yes, he's her second husband. She married him in the fifties. He's very good to her, but he isn't the man that Teddy truly loved. That was the greatest secret she shared with me. When the Russians marched into Estonia again in 1940, Dagmar and her mother were terrified. She married a German colleague so she could get German nationality. They divorced soon after, but then she had documents to get herself and her mother to Germany. On the train journey she met an Estonian student called Boris. She told me it was love at first sight. They got engaged in Berlin, but in 1944 Boris was sent to the Russian front. She never heard what happened to him." Lilian's voice faltered, and my father placed a comforting hand on her arm.

"How long did she stay in Berlin?" my husband asked.

"In April 1945 she was working in an office outside the city when the Russians advanced to two kilometres away. She told me that she ran through a burning wood to escape, but she couldn't get back into Berlin to save her mother. She managed to reach Lübeck where she was safe because the British were there, but her mother later died of starvation in the Russian sector of Berlin."

For a while none of us spoke.

"Tell us about her. What is she like?" I asked.

"She's beautiful, at least in her photos she was. Tall and slim with dark hair and big brown eyes. And she's very clever, especially at languages. I've kept all her cards and letters, everything she's sent me over the years. She often wrote how much our friendship meant to her, how much it helped her in the darkest times." Lilian paused, and her fingers tightened on the stem of her wine glass. "I've just got to know what's happened to her now."

"We'll go there tomorrow and find out," I promised.

***

Though it was only mid-afternoon, darkness had fallen when we left the motorway and drove west towards the coast. Huge, wet snowflakes came swirling towards us to splatter onto the windscreen then slither away as the wipers swished them aside. Rolling banks of fog were swelling in from the sea, swallowing the headlights of the car, sucking us into a black vortex. The wind had risen, howling as it swept across the treeless landscape. I leaned forward, peering into the gloom to make out the contours of the road that snaked ahead. Then, all at once, we were there. I drew up in front of an unpretentious house.

"You go with Lilian so you can translate," my father said. "I'll wait here in the car."

A solitary street lamp lighted the rusty gate. Unpruned roses barred our way up the narrow path, showering us with drops of rain like icy tears. I pressed the tarnished brass bell beside the door, and deep inside the house we heard it ring. The windows remained in darkness. I pressed once more. A light appeared behind the glass panel in the door. There was the sound of slow footsteps in the hallway and then a bolt being drawn back. An elderly man stood before us, small and stooping.

"Hans?" I asked, before I remembered I was in Germany and addressed him by his full name.

He nodded wordlessly. I introduced Lilian and myself and asked if we might speak to his wife.

He did not seem surprised that we had come. "I'm afraid that's not possible," he said sadly. Although he spoke in German, Lilian tensed beside me.

"I'm sorry we've come unexpectedly. Perhaps we could just say hello?" I pleaded.

"I'll ask." He shuffled away. After a minute he was back. "All right," he almost whispered. "But don't tire her."

He led us to a tiny sitting room, stuffed with furniture and stiflingly hot. When my eyes had become accustomed to the gloom, I saw a tall woman lying on a couch. She was so thin that the blankets barely rose to cover her. Her skin was taut like yellow parchment over her high cheekbones, dark circles ringed her sunken eyes and her long, grey hair spread uncombed on her pillow, yet I realized how beautiful she must have been. With a great effort she raised one arm and reached out.

Continued below

"Lily!"

"Teddy!"



They didn't throw themselves into each other's arms with hugs and tears. In fact, they touched just once when Lilian grasped Dagmar's outstretched hand. Then she released it and took a seat, but their eyes never left each other's faces. Is it that their generation, the war generation, has seen so much that makes them so unshakeable? Or did they find each other's physical presence so unaccustomed that they chose to revert to words again?

Hans and I withdrew to the kitchen. "She's very ill," he confided to me in German as he made me tea. "It won't be long. I couldn't write and tell Lilian. My English isn't good enough, and Dagmar wouldn't let me."

When we went back into the room, Lilian was sitting where we had left her. She was still wearing her winter coat and her white fur cap, her curls peeping out beneath it like a silver halo. Her pink cheeks were glowing with health, her blue eyes shining. Then Dagmar turned her head and spoke to me for the first and only time.
"She is so lovely." That's all she said, four words in English, and they were true, in every respect.

Suddenly Dagmar seemed exhausted. She closed her eyes as we took our leave. Lilian pressed her hand. "Goodbye, Teddy dear," was all she said. Her voice was firm and under control.

Back in the car, I glanced at the clock as I turned the ignition key. Our visit had lasted seventeen minutes. Seventeen minutes for seventy years of friendship. While I drove I could hear my father and Lilian talking softly in the back, her low voice, his understanding murmurs, a quiet sob and the rustle of a paper handkerchief.

When Lilian spoke my name, her voice was steady. "Thank you for taking me there today," she said quite formally. "You don't know how much this has meant to me." A moment's silence followed before she spoke again. "If I gave you my letters from Dagmar, would you write a book about her? I think her story should be told. I'd like you to do it."
"I'm not sure I can," I answered. "It's such a tremendous responsibility, writing about another person's life. I really don't know if I'm up to it."
"Say you'll think about it, please."
"All right," I said. "But don't you think you should ask Dagmar first?"
There was a pause before Lilian spoke.
"I'm never going to hear from her again."
She never did.

***

Only a few days later, Hans rang to tell me that Dagmar had passed away.
Now, 21 years on, my father has long passed away too. Lilian is 102 years old and has just moved into a care home near her sons. When she writes to me, she thanks me for taking her to see her friend that day. She believes that friendship between women is stronger than war and expulsion, death and loss, sickness and a pandemic.

It is that belief I would like to share with you.

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Written by Susan Lau
Member of Anglo-German International Women's Association
Hamburg, Germany

BROWARD INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S CLUB

Greetings from Broward International Women's Club (BIWC) of Fort Lauderdale!

First of all, we wish all of you a very Happy, Safe and Healthy New Year. Our thoughts are with those of you who may have suffered or lost loved ones during this terrible pandemic and one can only hope that with wide use of vaccinations this virus will be brought under control and our lives can go back to normal.

Like most of you, because of the virus, we have been unable to carry on with our usual activities, but through the use of Zoom, we have held our Membership Meetings and actually held a wonderful Bingo Night which made a profit to go towards our scholarship fund. As most of you may be aware, we are a non-profit organization and any money we raise goes towards scholarships for foreign-born female students attending Nova Southeastern University who are needing assistance in finishing their studies. In spite of everything, we were still able to raise the money to donate $20,000.00 which gave 4 deserving young women $5,000 each. Also, because of one very generous member, who unfortunately passed away, her family created a scholarship in her memory, which allowed a fifth lady to benefit also.

We are an active vibrant group of ladies representing 40 countries and 130 members. In spite of COVID-19, our membership has survived and we will shortly be holding our January Meeting (via Zoom of course), which is normally held in a private home with a wonderful international buffet, provided by our members. However, this time, we will drink a glass of champagne to toast the New Year and share our experiences online.

We are preparing for the Installation of our 2021 - 2023 slate of Officers, along with honoring our volunteers who supported the work of BIWC for the last two years. More will be shared in the next issue.

The Board of Directors of the Broward International Women's Club wishes all of our Sister Clubs a Healthy and Happy New Year!





By Winnifred McPherson, BIWC President and Janet Brady, WCI Co-Liaison

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S CLUB OF BAKU







Dear WCI members,

May this new year 2021 bring you all & your families good health, happiness, prosperity and safety!

Coronavirus has compelled the whole world to lockdown themselves inside the houses! The world has never seen any such thing ever before even during the world wars! To win this war, the most important weapon is to quarantine ourselves under lockdown! As a result of this lockdown, we will win against Coronavirus. But everywhere there's emotional, economical and food crisis!

This fight against Coronavirus is everybody's! We all should unite! Each human being should stretch their hand to help each other during these difficult times!

International Women's Club is one of the best organizations which comes forward to help others selflessly! In these crisis times IWC members have come forward to help low-income families and seniors above 65 years, who are having food crisis.

IWC Board allocated 3000 Azn from charities money! IWC ladies raised another 5200 AZN to buy food boxes for 168 families living in different parts of Baku and surroundings. Each food box contained 20 different necessary food items worth 50 AZN per box.

Feeling so good and proud to be part of this wonderful group and that we could render at least a little help to the needy people! 🙏Thank you dear IWC ladies for all your monetary donations and organizational help in distribution of the food boxes to make 168 families happy!

God bless you all and your families with good health & happiness! Stay healthy & safe! 🙏🙏🙏



President Rajani Chandra-D'Mello







Some of the families that received donations from IWC Baku



By Rajani Chandra-D'Mello, IWC Baku President

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S CLUB OF HAMBURG

What a special year 2020 was! It taught us how blessed we are to be healthy and that celebrating and staying together with our loved ones are our greatest gifts!

For my part, I just love how during this COVID-19 crisis, our Clubs all work worldwide so intensively together! Thank you all so much! Our IWCHH loved the webinars. A huge Thank you to Welcome to Washington!

In 2020, our IWC Boards have faced a real challenge to keep our club lives alive without in-person meetings and to keep contact with our members. With the support of our creative members here, we were quite inventive and able to keep up with our Club life:) Just a little bit different.

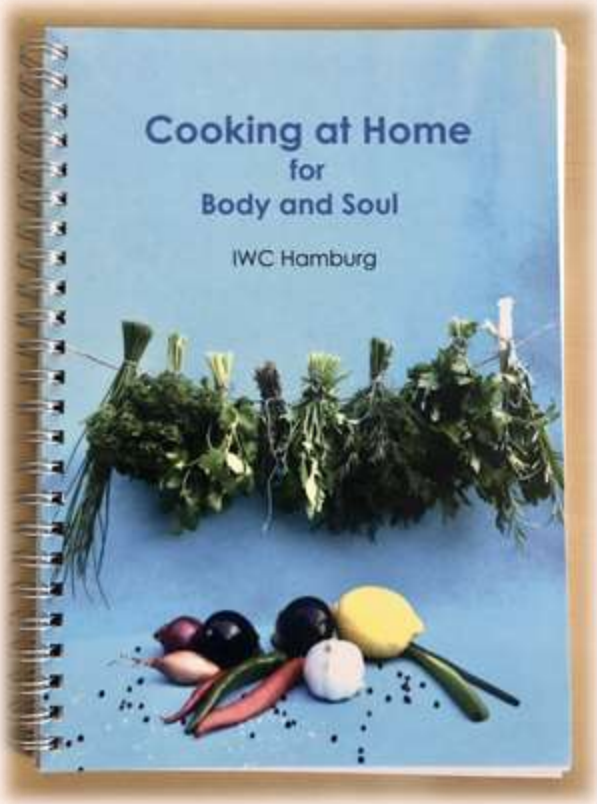
There are quite a lot of activities via WhatsApp groups: Cultural and Music groups; and Neighbourhood Coffee groups. One of the most loved ones is definitely the Culinary Cooking at Home, and for Xmas: Baking at Home. Our members exchanged via WhatsApp their favourite recipes. Sometimes we also had Zoom Cooking Classes. The cooking class was so successful that we could even publish a cookbook with the exchanged recipes for all our members: "Cooking at Home for Body and Soul."

For January/ February we would like to plan either a Zoom New Year's Toast or a Zoom Valentine's get-together. It has to be well organized in advance - Is there anyone who can give us some tips?

To all our sister Clubs in WCI, I hope we can continue to exchange ideas, webinars etc. Thank you all so much for being there with your support and let's hope that little by little life is going back to normal in 2021.

Stay all healthy and let's stay connected!

~ Martina





By Martina Hochberger, IWC President

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S CLUB OF NEW ENGLAND

The International Women's Club of New England had a banner fundraising year despite the pandemic. Every year our club chooses several local charities benefiting women and children to focus our fundraising efforts on.

This year we exceeded our fundraising goal and raised over $14,000! Over our club's history, we have proudly raised over $275,000. Most of these funds have come directly from our membership.

It truly was an "all hands on deck" kind of year, and our club decided early on in the pandemic to stay as positive as possible. Many members stepped up and led the way.

For example, we created an online pop-up shop that allowed members to sell handmade and other items, from beautiful scarves and jewelry to experiences to artisan breads. Items changed weekly and all proceeds were donated to our charity account.







Below, Fundraising Chair Ellen Farber offers piano or voice lessons online. Next to her, members Nancy Worthley and Angela LeBlanc assemble gift baskets for a holiday raffle.





Throughout the summer we continued to hold socially-distanced fundraising pot luck events at members' homes. Our lively Halloween fundraiser found participants wearing costumes and masks. The finicky New England weather was perfect that day.





And now we've reached the end of a challenging year, but our club's spirit continues to fly high. In December we offered our annual Holiday Singalong online through Zoom, with many members attending.

We're sending best wishes for 2021 to our Sister Clubs around the world. May we continue to grow and learn from each other through friendship and understanding.



By Linda Anderson, WCI Liaison

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S CLUB OF PHILADELPHIA



The International Women's Club of Philadelphia has found creative ways for members to stay connected. Zoom came to the rescue for our suburban and city book clubs as well as our monthly Happy Hours both in the city and in the burbs.

We arranged walks and picnics in the many beautiful Estates that are part of the Natural Lands Trust around Philadelphia. The summer and Fall were quite ideal for these outdoor events, and our masked and distanced picnics and walks are still happening on sunny days.

In December we had our "Virtual Holiday Cocktail Hour" where we were able to commiserate about our restricted lives and celebrate the small ways we could still be connected with family and friends.

A Mural Arts walk in Philadelphia was offered by one of our new members who is a trained guide for this wonderful organization.

We all long to travel again and meet for our regular pot-lucks, but we are grateful we are all safely quarantined.

Wishing all members of our sister clubs a healthy 2021!







Photos: The Magnificent Murals in Philadelphia

By Jacqueline Yates, WCI Liaison

Associação Beneficente Internacional
Women's Club Porto Alegre

Rio Grande do Sul – Brazil

On a happy side of our news, last November we were able to collect donations from our members which amounted to 250 Christmas gifts given to children of Amovita, one of the institutions we have adopted. Moreover we helped another institution, Emmanuel, that aims at helping destitute senior citizens.

On a sad side of our news we would like to mention the passing of one of our most active members, Nicole Thomé. It was a big loss that left a gap very difficult to fill.



Stay healthy. We wish you a great 2021!

By Isaura Riedl, WCI Liaison

THE WOMEN'S LEAGUE - BEIRUT





Mr. Ricardo Karam is a Lebanese television presenter, producer, talk-show host, author and public speaker.

On November 9, 2020, we managed to hold one General Meeting in premises belonging to the American University of Beirut but not on the main campus as usual due to the damage that affected the campus from the Port Blast.

The lecturer was Mr. Ricardo Karam, a public figure who gave us a presentation titled "The Art of Mining Stories of Hope" and was attended by 50 ladies only all wearing their masks and observing social distance.



At the General Meeting

We also had a small gathering in a coffee shop mainly to get together. We could also make a relatively small donation to help needy people who were affected by the Port Blast which was presented to one of the NGOs helping the many needy and displaced people as this blast damaged a big part of East Beirut.

As our activities were very limited, we could not fulfil our commitment to the "Disabled Students Fund" at the American University of Beirut as usual for our activities were very limited and our donation was a small amount.

On the hope that the whole world will soon be free from this deadly COVID-19, and the year 2021 will be a healthier one, I wish you all a happy New Year. ~ Lamia



Giving our donation to Dr. Najib Khalaf for the victims of the Port Blast

By Lamia Kawar, TWL President

Dear WCI ladies,

We wish to extend our best wishes to all of you in this New Year. May you all be able to reach all your goals for this year and that you and your members will stay safe during this worldwide pandemic.

Here at VIA Lebanon International Club, we have had to face enormous challenges last year and as things look, this year also. Starting in November, all our social gatherings have been canceled time and time again because of the social unrest, protests, and COVID lockdowns.

As an NGO, we started the year by contributing with monetary help to two NGOs operating in the country. We helped Ayadina, an NGO that helps marginal children and elderly by contributing with meals to the elders in their care and we donated money to the Cancer Center, an organization that encompasses all the aid services to cancer patients in Beirut. After October, we have not been able to meet and make future plans.

Unlike other countries, Lebanon is facing not only the COVID pandemic but also an economic collapse, a government that is on hold and barely functioning, and we are still dealing with the nuclear blast at the port of Beirut that killed and made many homeless. We want to help, but we need a quorum, which implies meeting and signing in person, which we have not been able to do. Since we are an International club and most of our members are foreigners, because of the situation some members have left and we expect many more to follow in the months ahead.

These are difficult times for long-established clubs and NGOs in Lebanon, so much so for a one like ours that has just barely begun. We are basically not functioning as an NGO and because of the dire economic situation in the country; we are trying to just keep the members abreast by connecting with them with articles in our monthly newsletter and with each other through our WhatsApp.

We have asked our members to share their talents: their professional skills, their hobbies, and ideas with each other through articles, videos, and blogs that we incorporated in our newsletters. This connection with our members has been a lifeline for them all. It has helped them share their anxieties and worries about the country and the pandemic and helped them remain calm and united. It is all we can do at the present time. We planned and still are planning a lot of tours and outings, but we keep canceling due to the situation we are living through. Thanks to social media, and our member's spontaneous collaboration we remain active.

We would like to say we have had events and tell you all about them, but unfortunately, we have little to say. We are starting our third lockdown this week for the next three weeks. Hopefully, by then, we will have something positive to share with you. In the meantime, please let us know how you are connecting with your members. We covet your prayers this year for Lebanon's future stability and the eradication of this pandemic throughout the world. Stay Safe.

Best Regards,
Diana Abulhousn, VIA Founder

By Diana Abulhousn, VIA Founder

WELCOME TO COLORADO INTERNATIONAL CLUB

Last spring, we held a lovely Spring Coffee followed by some great programs: Book Reviews, "That Churchill Woman" by Stephanie Barron, Exploring Denver Food & Wine at a local restaurant with the woman chef/owner, a presentation by the physician co-founder of a women's health research center: "Women, Diabetes & the Heart and Why Gender Differences Matter," and a beautiful demonstration of "The Art of Ikebana."







In summer, we had to move to Zoom and still were able to have great programs, including "Ireland, Its Soul with an Irish-American Flair," "Water: The Oil of the 21st Century," and a member's Life Story: "A Life That Didn't Go as Planned." We intermittently continued weekly & monthly get-togethers for Bridge, Mah Jongg, and our French and Spanish language groups.

A Calling Committee was formed to see how our members were doing; it was especially appreciated by those who live alone or had been ill. In place of our annual Fall Coffee, we held a fun "drive in" Champagne Lunch. Members were greeted at an outdoor location to pick up their box lunch, fall event calendar and membership directory. More than 100 members participated even though temperatures had plummeted to 30°F from 100°F the day before! At the stroke of 1 pm, Denver's classical music station acknowledged our club's mission of international friendship & education and played lovely music for us.







By last fall, we were continuing on Zoom: "A [19th C.] Russian Industrialist Discovers French Art" based on a remarkable 2016 Paris exhibit of 130 Impressionist and Cubist paintings displayed for the first time together, outside Russia, "The Alfred Dreyfus Affair: A Grave Miscarriage of Justice," and "Bookselling as An Art."



Welcome to Washington invited sister clubs to a webinar with the U.S. Institute for Peace that we thoroughly enjoyed. Thank you, WTW! At year-end, a WTC group personalized greeting cards for our members, which carried a lovely, imprinted message: "Simple moments can bring great joy."

By Diane Lenfest-Gal, WTC President

WELCOME TO FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL CLUB

Our season started again in November. Although we could not meet in person, the members of WFLIC used their considerable talents and creativity to keep programs and interest group activities flourishing.

We offered two member-wide Zoom meetings in the last quarter of 2020. In November we had the pleasure to hear Donna Suddeth share with us her trip to Qatar. In December Dawn Montecalvo, President of the Guadalupe Center, educated our members about a local nonprofit organization that provides educational programs to students who are economically disadvantaged.





Ten interested groups continued to gather via Zoom, once a month. Our best attended interest group is "Let's Go On A Trip Together." We travel virtually to the far corners of our beautiful world.



In October, Maria Winkler shared her 2019 travel experience through Central Asia. The presentation took us to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan.

You can read a short article about the journey by clicking this LINK (https://circumnavigators.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Log2020iss1-1.23.20.pdf).

Sophie Classen shared her travel experiences to Sicily with us in September and in December she took us to Vienna, Austria, on a virtual walking tour through the city and its fascinating Christmas markets.

Last but not least, WFLIC is happy to report that we continue to attract new members. This past December we had eight new members join us. WFLIC continues to stay strong.

We are hopeful that better times are ahead in 2021. Worldwide, several vaccines have been approved and in SW Florida the vaccination process has started.

The ladies of Welcome to Florida are wishing everyone in the WCI family a happy and healthy 2021!

By Maria Winkler, WCI Liaison

WELCOME TO KOREA INTERNATIONAL CLUB

Welcome to Korea International Club (WKIC) had a 4th anniversary celebration and a special lecture on Nov. 10th at 2:30 pm at Maewha Hall in the Press Center. WKIC has been holding various programs on the purpose of empowering women and gender equality since the foundation. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the crowd was not big. 75 people gathered and spent the time enjoying the small concert by Prof. Chungwha Lim who sang beautiful songs and the special lecture on political circumstances around Korea. Dr. Choonkeun Lee talked about the US election and its impact to the international power politics. The whole session was so eye-opening that each member would have felt that it's never too late to learn something new from different perspectives. A special award was also given to three people who donated their valuable time to run the classes (Hanji Painting, English Conversation Class, and Flower Arrangement Class).



Speaking of the Flower Arrangement class, the 4th Tuesday is the date each member keeps waiting for since the class is never boring with the beauty and the bounty of the flowers. WKIC wanted to show its appreciation through the award since the organization wouldn't be able to grow without the volunteer's help.



By Sunny Shin, WCI Liaison

WELCOME TO THE 21ST CENTURY!*

A reflection on our modern day living

Our Phones – Wireless!	Relationships – Meaningless!
Cooking – Fireless!	Attitude – Careless!
Cars – Keyless!	Babies – Fatherless!
Food – Fatless!	Feelings – Heartless!
Tyres – Tubeless!	Education – Valueless!
Tools – Cordless!	Children – Mannerless!
Dress – Sleeveless!	Government – Useless!
Youth – Jobless!	PARLIAMENT – CLUELESS!!!
Leaders – Shameless!	MASSES – HELPLESS!!!

Everything is becoming LESS but still **our hope in Future** is – **Endless**

In fact I am *Speechless* Because **FRIENDSHIPS** remain ***Priceless*!!**

If you don't share this, the message is worthless!



A picnic during the let up of the pandemic in brighter days

*Author Unknown

By Dee Phillips Medawar, WCI Liaison

WELCOME TO TAIPEI INTERNATIONAL CLUB

Since the outbreak of Covid-19, Taiwan has had a relatively low number of confirmed cases compared to the rest of the world.

Nevertheless, the government still took a strict approach in dealing with the pandemic. Our club postponed all activities from the beginning of February until Mid-June.

Activities only resumed after the CDC task force lifted several bans and regulations on outdoors & indoors distancing rules, after there have been no new confirmed cases for a long period of time.





The Annual Registration Luncheon was held on June 30th, when new board and Club President Mrs. Susan Su Wang were elected. It was such a heartwarming event, because we could finally sit side by side around the table with our friends.



August 18th, we invited our members to listen to an interesting Annual Lecture featuring by Taiwan Bar Studio, which is run by a group of young, talented and creatives who produce short animation films about Taiwanese culture and history.





For our Autumn Excursion, we took the High-Speed Rail and travelled down to Taichung, and then subsequently took two coach buses ride to the magnificent Chung Tai Zen Monastery in Nantou. The grand structures of the monastery and its World Museum are simply eye opening. The museum's collection includes Buddhist statues and artifacts that date back to the 6th A.D., and we were told that that this collection took 30 years to curate. For lunch, needless to say, we enjoyed a scrumptious and delicious 10-course vegetarian meal.



The most anticipated Christmas Luncheon was held on December 3rd, at the Far Eastern Shangri-La Plaza Hotel. With a record of 190 members and friends in attendance. The honorary members of Diplomatic Corps showcased their national costumes on the catwalk, and some Interest Group members also gave a stunning performance on stage. Alas, what a joyful time we had!



Last but not least, we had a very meaningful "Orange the World" flash mob event on December 4th, in collaboration with Zonta International District 31. Some of our honorary members of Diplomatic Corps as well as our board members were graciously received by the Mayor of New Taipei City, Mr. Hou You-yi. "Say No to Violence Against Women" is a noble cause for all societies.





WTIC continued below

Meanwhile, our fourteen Interest Groups have prepared loads of fun events for our members: **International Cooking Demo** executed two hugely successful programs: 1) we were taught how to seal the 18-fold steamed bun that brought Din Tai Fung its one Michelin star in 2019.
2) Mr. & Mrs. Rudorfer of the Representative of Austrian Office in Taipei gave a PowerPoint presentation on Vienna, while Mrs. Susanne Ramsl taught us how to make Apple Strudel and Kaiserschmarm. Not to mention the lovely Austrian music and singing that drew a perfect ending note to the charming event.









Exploration Group took us to the Grand Hotel, Delta Foundation in Neihu, Taipei Mayor's Residence Art Salon to do the Indigo Dye, and a very prestigious Drum Factory.



Art & Culture Interest Group has arranged four iconic exhibitions for our members: 1) Paul Chiang: A Retrospective, 2) A-San Wu & Paloma Chang Joint Exhibition, 3) A visit to Yang San Lang Art Museum, and 4) "She & Her " Exhibition at the National Palace Museum.







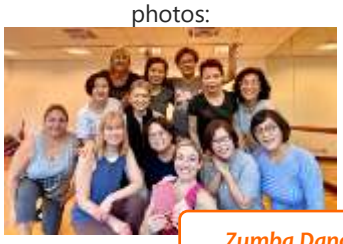


Gourmet Group brings our members to savor a variety of international food in Taipei. A toast to their lovely Chairpersons Zee & Margaret, truly a job well done!





The other Interest Groups have fixed meeting dates and time, following are their activity photos:



Zumba Dance



Table Tennis



Tai Chi Chuan



Sewing Group



Chi Gong



Yoga



Chinese Brush Painting



Golf Group



Bridge

Traditional Chinese Knotting



By Jessica Jen-hwey Liu Chia, WTIC Deputy Secretary

WELCOME TO TURKISH CYPRUS CLUB



We had a total shutdown and then partial reopening and unfortunately now the COVID-19 cases are going up. There is currently a 10-day quarantine for everyone who comes to Northern Cyprus.

In the meantime, we held sporadic meetings and one Zoom meeting. We will continue with Zoom meetings and plan to invite some speakers.

We have visited two educational institutions for disabled children and took puzzles and board games so that they would be entertained.



We also had two very short meetings outdoors until the weather permitted just to keep in touch.





We made a contribution to the earthquake victims in Izmir. Last week we went to visit the newly elected President Ersin Tatar and his wife Sibel Tatar, who is also our member.

By Zeynep Akgunay, WTCC President

WELCOME TO WASHINGTON INTERNATIONAL CLUB

Dear Ladies,

The Fall of 2020 was a case of building everything from scratch.

Fortunately, we had already experimented with the jump to web- based programming back in May, for our year-end Annual General Meeting. That included a Zoom "hand off" from one administration to another! We followed with "Zoom Coffee Hours" to prepare members for online engagements in the fall.



Aided by the Technology Committee's magic wands, we produced some surprising programming which we were delighted to share with sister WCI Clubs at this time. Speakers as well as audiences were connecting from far-flung places!



Our first large, Zoom program featured a renowned Archaeologist hosted by the Egyptian Embassy, discussing Queens of Ancient Egypt, Live from Cairo!

Members of sister clubs around the world joined us, as well as our Joint Event partner, the Association of American Foreign Service Worldwide.



Fall Tea typically begins our season, and we truly missed each others' company. However, we managed to enjoy some small, outdoor events safely for those comfortable with venturing out, like a "Telling Our Stories" gathering or a demonstration on "Beekeeping" in our hosts' beautiful gardens.



A sense of humor was also vital in keeping spirits up. Our ladies outdid themselves with witty programs like "Covid Couture"!

Our events cater to our interests and needs, whether in the form of educating ourselves or in the form of inspiration. Thankfully, moving to Zoom formats did not hamper that at all.

As the US was heading into one of the most contentious elections this fall, we hosted a very informative webinar analyzing political polarization. The insights from the academic expert were highly illuminating and useful!

Our Interest Groups also supplied us with travel inspiration, to spark our wanderlust, temporarily suppressed. The modern marvel was that our speakers were connecting all the way from lockdown in South America!



Finally, our ladies prepared for the holidays by sharing entertaining tips and traditions across various cultures.



I am beyond proud of our ladies this year!

~ Jenny

Fall/Winter 2020

By Jenny Sicat Crabbe, WTW President

WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL BORDER CLUB

We had a great beginning in 2020 with our membership drive, then the Pandemic (COVID-19) happened. It has certainly been interesting times we are living in. None of us could have imagined what has happened since and what we are still going through. It sure has been a life changing experience for all of us.



Board Members
Left - Right: Maria Walker, Elizabeth Long, Mona Beizai

We have been working on engaging members thru Social Media, Zoom meetings. Our Liaison, Maria Walker, sponsored a couple of meetings. We had an exciting cooking class, learning how to make a Spanish Omelet then she started hosting Happy Hours every other Friday! We also had meetings just to find out how we were coping through these hard times.





We were lucky to crash into other clubs Zoom meetings. Welcome to Washington and Welcome to Florida were very gracious in engaging us.

We hope that the Zoom meetings will allow us to develop the groups of interest that up to now we have not been able to establish like having a Book Reading Group.



We will try to engage members and challenge them to look through their homes and sort items that can be donated to Women's Organizations in need. Once it is safe to do so, we can hold a group donation day.

By Elizabeth Long, WIBC President

WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL CLUB - JAKARTA

Ways and Means: In these challenging times, we at Ways and Means (the club's fundraising arm) have had to resort to other ideas on how to gain funds for our institutions and charitable undertakings.

Last 22nd of July, we started our WIC Online Shop as part of our fundraiser during the pandemic. It has proved to be promising as we received an excellent response from our members. All the proceeds will go to the various organisations which we assist and support.

Some good news, we had a few lovely surprises from our dedicated members. Their money donations are much appreciated and we know these will be of a huge help to us. A massive Thank you indeed!!

Social Welfare: WIC Jakarta continues to support 13 institutions including 3 Senior Homes. Due to the pandemic, we visit the institutions only for dropping the staple food or their other needs, but cannot do activities with them like usual.



Two organizations supported by the club: Yayasan "Rumpun Anak Pesisir" (charity foundation) at left and Panti Asuhan "Bhakti Kasih" (an orphanage) at right.



For Seniors' Day 2020 celebration in October, we provided lunch boxes, Staple Food packages and Hygiene Care packages. The seniors were very happy to receive them, especially to get a visit from the Foster Aunts (WIC Volunteers). They said they feel lonely during these months, as they cannot go out, therefore receiving goody bags and simple attention as "hi" is so meaningful to them.







Entertainment: WIC held Webinars from September to December with guest experts speaking on topics like "The Importance of Liver Health During Pandemic," "Superfoods to Boost your Immune System," and "Dementia Alzheimer - How to Deal with It."

- The Indonesia Independence Day on September 28th was celebrated with a Talk Show via Zoom featuring guest speakers on the topic "Fit and Healthy During the Pandemic." Those who joined the event were all sent goodie bags.
- An online musical event called "Melody & Memory" was held in October that had participants joining in the singing and dancing. Prizes were given to the lucky draw, Best Energetic and Music Quiz winners.
- On November 2nd, Past President Elmyra Bambang and EC 2018-2020 conducted the 70th WIC Jakarta Anniversary at the Clubhouse. Previously planned as a large celebration scheduled for March, the event was attended only by the representation ladies from EC 2018-2020 and EC 2020-2022 in order to abide by the government's pandemic protocol.
- On November 23rd, we held the Diwali Celebration with a Bingo card game. Mrs. Pooja Assomull, Mrs. Diksha Lalchandani and Laxmi Jaiswal shared their traditional food, home decors and the history of Diwali during this special occasion.
- On December 7th, we held the first actual event "Rejoice Christmas" in Raffles hotel, adhering to proper health protocols, such as wearing mask, face shield, rapid testing, arranging the social distancing for registration, sitting arrangement and food service.



Delicious Diwali Fare



"Rejoice Christmas" at the Raffles Hotel; our first physical event after lockdown

*Virtual **WIC's GOT TALENT** on November 26*



Scholarship: Deserving students continued to receive their monthly stipends; funds were allocated for book vouchers; recruitment of new students is in progress; and Certificates were sent to those who graduated. WIC Jakarta thanked WCI for its goodwill gesture. It has been put to good use.

Circle of Activities: WIC offers a whole range of fun and interesting activities for their members such as: Yoga; Happy Hour; Embroidery & Handicraft; Bahasa Indonesia Conversation Class; Fun Walk Outdoor Activities; Study & Discussion; Bingo Circle; and Batik Circle.

From Ari Wijayanti Nugroho, WIC Jakarta President

Friendship and Understanding on the World Stage

By Eshrat Demougeot



United Nations Consultative Status for WCI



WCI Founder Marian Adair (standing) and Eshrat Demougeot (seated)

Marian, Eshrat and the Great Idea

My initial association with Welcome Clubs began in London, England, where my husband and I lived at the time. I became a member of Welcome to London through an acquaintance who sponsored me. I so enjoyed my membership with the club that when we returned home to Annapolis, Maryland, in 1989, my membership was transferred to Welcome to Washington.

Shortly after my return, WTW hosted a conference in Washington. It was then that I met Marian Adair during a bus trip to Charlottesville, Virginia. I was sitting at the back of the bus when a very distinguished and beautiful lady approached me, introduced herself and sat next to me. She and I spoke in length getting to know one another. When she learned that I had served on the group that produced a monthly publication for the London membership, she shared with me how she was working on creating an umbrella organisation to bring all the clubs in Europe to unite together in advancing the basic principle of "Friendship & Understanding" among women of all cultures. She asked me to assist her in communicating between the leadership of those clubs. This endeavor led me to become involved with WCI, where I served over the years in different capacities on the Executive Committee.

In 2000, I was elected as President of WCI. Marian congratulated me and asked what my agenda was to advance its goals. I shared, with trepidation, my two goals, one of which was to take WCI's message of "Friendship and Understanding" onto the World Stage where it belonged. Secondly, to become financially independent. Her next question, to my surprise, was not to discourage me, but to explain how I hoped to achieve it. Luckily, I had on my committee an individual who had the contacts that were needed to approach the United Nations.

During my three-year term, I pursued my goal in many ways. I addressed it at Conferences and Board Meetings and even wrote about the issue in an article for the Worldwide Link. I concluded that this was a long-term goal, and only through perseverance, the right connections and at the right time, this could become a reality.

Continued below

Great Ideas Wait for the Right People to Come Along

In 2002, at the Taipei Conference, I became acquainted with Athenia Kuo, a highly respected member of her club. Over the years, we developed a close friendship. During one of our many conversations by phone, Athenia shared with me that in the next few weeks, she was taking part as a delegate of Dr. Jungsook Kim of South Korea, who held a prominent position at the United Nations. It was through this introduction that WCI acquired both a club in Seoul and a contact to the United Nations.

In the meantime, we were in the process of electing the next President of WCI. Maria Fernanda Arduino, whom I had met in 2008 at the conference in San Diego, expressed her interest in the position. However, she requested the Chair of the Nominating Committee, to speak with me prior to making her commitment. Maria Fernanda and I spoke, and when asked, I shared with her the then current status of WCI. Furthermore, I shared what I foresaw as my vision that WCI's message rightly belonged on the World Stage. In addition to that, WCI needed to adopt "Education" as an initiative which was very relevant in the world we lived in.

In 2016, Maria Fernanda was elected as President of WCI. In December of 2016, Dr. Kim established "Welcome to Korea" as member of WCI. She held the first anniversary of the club in November of 2017, which Maria Fernanda attended as President of WCI. The subject of the United Nations was brought up and Dr. Kim graciously offered her support. In March of 2018, Maria Fernanda and I were invited to the United Nations by Dr. Kim as members of her delegation to ECOSOC and the Commission on the Status of Women. Needless to say, it was awe-inspiring.

Our deepest gratitude goes to everyone, namely Dr. Kim, Athenia and Maria Fernanda. The application was submitted in 2018 and officially accepted in 2020.



Friendship and Understanding in Action at the UN Plaza Hotel November 2017

Dr. Jungsook Kim, President of International Council of Women (ICW) Eshrat Demougeot & Maria Fernanda Arduino, former WCI Presidents



ECOSOC Meeting at the UN New York, March 2018

From left: Eshrat Demougeot, Linda Liu, Welcome to Taipei/ VP ICW & Maria Fernanda Arduino

Eshrat Demougeot is a WCI Founder's Representative, former WCI President, and a member of Welcome to Washington International Club.

This article was originally written for and published in Welcome to Washington's Fall/Winter 2020 Newsletter.

Thank you to WTW President Jenny Crabbe for sharing!

8th March Women's Day

2:00 PM GMT

The Power of Friendship

WCI

Welcome Clubs International

WCI cordially invites you to an

International Women's Day

WEBINAR

Women, Diversity, and Peace

Join our guest speakers:

Dr. Nicola Byok, Diversity Strategist, Hamburg, Germany

Danielle Robertson, Program Officer, the U.S. Institute of Peace





How pivotal are women to a sustainable peace process?
What are the benefits to society when women are in leadership roles?
How has the pandemic impacted women and equality?

- To Register, please go to the member site of **www.wciclubs.org** under "Meetings," then "Virtual Meetings." Fill out the registration form and receive your confirmation e-mail (password: WCIMembers2019) ***or***
- Register with your WCI Club Liaison.

Deadline for registration is March 3rd, and on a first-come-first-serve basis.