cfuw BELLEVILLE AND DISTRICT

Newsletter **October 2026**

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Upcoming Events

General Meeting – November 18

Speaker : Kim Naylor

TEACHING TOGETHER CTF/FCE

Christmas Dinner – December 2, Sans Souci

Dress in your best festive attire ,and get ready to celebrate with friends old and new. We can't wait to see you there! Bring new or gently-used children's books for Firefighters' Toy Drive.

Websites:

GWI: graduatewomen.org

CFUW National: cfuw.org

CFUW Ontario Council: cfuwontariocouncil.org

CFUW Belleville & District: cfuwbelleville.com

Emails:

GENERAL: cfuwbelleville@gmail.com

COMMUNICATIONS: cfuwbellevillecomm@gmail.com

TECHNICAL/ZOOM: cfuwwebex@gmail.com

General Meeting
Wednesday, October 21, 2026

St. Thomas Anglican Church, Belleville

Social 6:30 Meeting 7:00

Book Sale – only $2

Guest Speaker: Liz Kohn
Base 31: A Rich Past, A Bright Future



BRING YOUR MUG
And used books
for the book sale





President's Report – Pauline Witzke



Now that we have had our opening meeting for the year, the second meeting is used to review our club finances. We will hear from our two Treasurers, Lori Bootsma for the club's general account and Barbara Royce-Payne for the Scholarship Trust Fund. The financial statements will be sent to you as part of the October General Meeting package.
Our guest speaker topic for this month is "Base 31, how a former military base has become a cultural destination in Prince Edward County". In this way, we show our support for local businesses and cultural events and build the community that, in turn, supports our Annual Garden Tour fundraiser.

Looking forward to seeing you there!

Meanwhile, this photo explains where I was last meeting – cycling the Petit Train du Nord trail in Quebec, heavenly!

Membership – Carol Fisher

And we're off!!

The Club has met to begin this new season, and we are so looking forward to the programs and activities planned for each of us by women just like us!! Women with energy, interest, lifelong learners and women who want to be together and share their potential.

Our CFUW was highlighted in the fall edition of GRAPEVINE magazine. I do hope you will pick up a copy and see for yourself. The online edition can be found here. Besides the club article, one of our members authored two articles: A regular column 'Famous Women We've Never Heard About' and an excerpt from an upcoming book: Mayaluum: Tulum and the Caribbean Coast. You won't be able to congratulate **Lola Reid Allin** at the October meeting...she'll be in Namibia!

Congratulations to **Ann Lanning**, who won the Indigo gift card for sending in her membership fee before September 16th. We are still awaiting 19 members to pay for this year! Let's send in those fees ASAP!

It is with great sadness I report the passing of a very active member**, Barb Durnford**. Her life and energy were directed towards our Scholarship Trust Fund and towards being physically active and engaged with many interest groups. We will miss you, Barb. Her obituary can be read here.

Since last spring, we have welcomed new members and welcomed back members. I wish to challenge each of you to find these women at the next meeting or in your interest groups and extend a welcome and be curious about their coming into CFUW.

Here is the list…

Miranda Traas, Maureen Simmons, Laurie Watts, Jocelyn McCreary

I am looking for **Greeters** for meetings this year. Please sign up at the October meeting or email me!!



The **2026-27 Members Directory** will be issued by October 21st as we want to include all members with their correct information. If you have had a change of address, phone number or email address, please let me know at my email address: carol.ann.fisher@gmail.com

A popular event each year is the **October Book Sale.** On Wednesday, October 21st please bring gently used books, fiction or nonfiction, to share with your club members. You can take home any books that catch your eye **at $2.00 each** and we hope to raise funds for the Club's general fund. Any books not purchased will be donated to the Alzheimer's Society, our local branch. We are a club of avid readers so there is always a great selection of titles to choose from at a great price - **$2.00 each!!**

Our first- and second-year members will be formally invited to our New Members' Tea in November. Watch for your invitation coming soon to your inbox.

Education and Advocacy– Anne Banks Pidduck

Watch this space for opportunities to make a difference – locally, provincially, nationally!



Letter-writing is one of the fastest and easiest acts of advocacy. The letter should be one succinct page, including a brief background, a specific ask, relevance, action to take, and thanks. Club member Mary Miller has been encouraging us to write letters supporting our Afghan families in Toronto for several years now.

Letters can be written 'on behalf of CFUW' only by CFUW Presidents for local elected officials, Ontario Council for provincial matters, and CFUW National for federal issues. Individual members may write on behalf of themselves but not CFUW other than through the protocol above.

Pictured on the left is Roya Shafari, an Afghan athlete who escaped from the Taliban in 2021 with help from CFUW Southport (Port Elgin, ON).

In July we were approached by CFUW Southport to support their letter-writing advocacy for elite refugee women athletes, such as Roya. We agreed to support their advocacy and prepared two letters from CFUW Belleville to our local MP, Chris Malette, with additional background and details. One letter was specifically on behalf of Roya Shafai and the second was on behalf of all refugee women in Canada.

As of October 1, neither CFUW Southport nor CFUW Belleville have heard of any progress on Roya's case. Roya's mentor, Friba Rezayee, Afghanistan's first female Olympic judo athlete (2004 Athens Olympics), and founder of Women Leaders of Tomorrow in Vancouver has also been advocating on her behalf. Bruce Kidd, former Olympian and Canadian Olympic Committee member, advised Roya and her supporters to go to the media if necessary. They are currently considering that and other options.

The full letter to Chris Malette is on the last page of this newsletter.

Interest Groups – Denise Taleski

A list of the Club's interest groups are on your Program Card, with leaders listed. The September newsletter had a comprehensive list, with descriptions, if you need more information. It can be found in the Members Section on the Club website.

Scholarship – Pat Loughren, VP Scholarship Trust

We have been working with the family of Barb Durnford to ensure Barb's wishes are honoured.

Graduate Women International – Kristina Stakenvicius

Click here to register for the 5:00 p.m. Central European Time session (Noon DST):
https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/XO_JGLMhSHOsHPY4Jc7GZw#/registration



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HELP WANTED



1. One or two members with word processing skills to prepare two documents annually:
Program Card (August busy time)
Annual Report (April May busy time)

June Boudreau can provide details on what is required.

2. The Sponsorship Committee of the Garden Tour will be missing Barb Durnford's presence, enthusiasm and encouragement. Our first meeting is usually at the end of October. If you would like to join a team inspired by Barb and devoted to ensuring the success of the Sponsor program, please contact Laura Hare.

FUNDSCRIP

Our club has an account with FUNDSCRIP where you can purchase gift cards online. You receive the full value of the gift card and the club receives a percentage from FUNDSCRIP. You can order a card and have it delivered to another address – this is great for gifts – birthday, Christmas …whatever!

Each month, there are specials where the retailer offers a higher payout percentage than normal. In October, this includes: Chapters/Indigo, Cineplex, Pita Pit

Visit https://www.fundscrip.com/login to learn more and to purchase your gift cards. Questions? Contact Mary Milne or Laura Hare who are regular users.

Website, Instagram, Facebook– Jane Taylor

Please take some time to examine our website, especially if you are leading an interest group or event. Information will likely need some updating for the new 2026-2027 season: contact info, schedule, activities etc. I'm happy to update the page if you send me the details.

Thank you to those members who regularly send articles and photos of club and interest group activities to me at jetaylor654@gmail.com for posting on our website, Facebook and Instagram pages.

A reminder that if you receive email from Hazel Canuck that is me forwarding email from our club email address to the appropriate recipients.

Communications– Laura Hare

A sympathy card was sent to the family of Barb Durnford.

Please continue to send information about activities related to the life of members – significant anniversaries, birthdays, deaths and illnesses, so that cards can be sent.
Email: cfuwbellevillecomm@gmail.com.

Information for the newsletter should be sent in a Word or Excel document or body of an email. Pictures are most welcome, too. **Please do not send PDF files for information that is part of the newsletter.**

All information for the November Newsletter is **due by 6:00 pm, Nov 6, the first Friday of the month**

UPCOMING EVENTS



July 14, 2026

Mr. Chris Malette, MP, Bay of Quinte

Dear Mr. Malette,

Local Afghan Refugee and Elite Athlete, Roya Shafai, Unable to Compete in Olympics

We are writing on behalf of CFUW Belleville & District, an affiliate of CFUW (Canadian Federation of University Women), a national organization with 94 Clubs across Canada and over 6,600 members. Throughout our 105-year history, CFUW has worked to achieve a world in which women and girls are educated and empowered to make transformative change in the world.

We respectfully ask that the Government of Canada, through Sport Canada and in partnership with the Canadian Olympic Committee, **explore mechanisms that would allow Roya Shafai** and other elite Afghan women athletes residing in Canada **to compete internationally as Neutral Athletes**. Such an approach would align with the International Olympic Committee's commitment to supporting refugee athletes and ensuring that talented competitors are not excluded because of circumstances beyond their control.

Through Women Leaders of Tomorrow, Roya received a student visa and full scholarship to Loyalist College in 2024, where she competed on the cross-country running team while continuing her sport of judo. She is now a graduate, employed in Belleville as a recreation therapist, and training with the goal of qualifying for the **Refugee Olympic Team for the 2028 Olympic Games**. To be considered for the Refugee Olympic Team, she must compete in events sanctioned by the International Judo Federation. Unfortunately, Roya has no recognized national judo federation through which she can compete. Roya is not yet a Canadian citizen or permanent resident and therefore cannot compete for Judo Canada. As well, she cannot compete for Afghanistan because it currently prohibits women from participating in sport, education, and public life.

We would appreciate your support in **raising this matter with the Secretary of State (Sport)**, the Honourable Adam Van Koeverden, the Canadian Olympic Committee, and other relevant federal authorities.

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue.

Yours sincerely,

Pauline Witzke

Pauline Witzke
President, CFUW Belleville & District

Anne Banks Pidduck

Anne Banks Pidduck
Vice President, Education & Advocacy