

April 2021 eBulletin



Springing back!

Last week's **Annual General Meeting** was a great opportunity to catch up on MCLL life in the past year. About 90 people tuned in on Zoom as President **Sandra Baines** congratulated members who planned, led, and attended two full semesters of lectures and study groups, for their "great resourcefulness and commitment, not to mention resilience" in a challenging time. She also thanked MCLL Executive Officer **Ana Milic** for her constant support. (Ana, in turn, thanked members who marked her recent birthday with a catering meal voucher for two.)

New hands at the helm: Attendees approved a new slate of board members for 2021-22. Replacing Sandra as President in June will be **Jeff Sidel**, while our new vice-president is **Robert Winters**. Five committee heads will retain their roles for another term, but four others will step down or take on new

responsibilities. New faces include **Sheila Mason**, replacing **Nina Maksymiw** as curriculum committee chair; **Richard Ruel**, who succeeds **Julie Wait** as development chair; and **Sid Rosen**, replacing **Alice Sidorow** as treasurer. Alice moves laterally into the shoes of **Leslie Paris**, as planning committee chair.

Afloat again: Alice reported positively on MCLL finances, up significantly after a rough start last spring when registration was down 40 per cent and study groups were free. The fall and winter semesters saw an increase in registrations, which combined with a 30 per cent drop in operating expenses left us with a healthy surplus.

Sad losses: An inability to mourn together during the pandemic has made the deaths of several of our members especially painful. Among those we have lost: **Mebbie Atkins, Gerri Barrer, Marie Blydt-Hansen, Agnes Kent, Jan Meyers, Ann Pearson, Judith Schurman, Estelle Smyth and Sheila Whitzman.** To honour them, **Clive Brewer** read a poignant passage from the James Joyce collection *Dubliners*.



Happier news: A congratulatory message from MCLL was sent to **Ben Sperer** on the occasion of his amazing 100th birthday. President Sandra and Ana Milic thanked Ben for his long years of engagement in lifelong learning. Our Volunteer of the Year is **Sally Cooper**, long-time anchor of our busy office, whether from downtown or from home. Sally received multiple testimonials

referring to her great sense of humour and willingness to go beyond the call of duty.

Susan Van Gelder noted special thanks are due to the many hosts who have offered many hours in the past year to help users experiencing technical difficulties, and to ensure study groups and lectures run smoothly.

Missing the classroom: Not everyone wants to be online. Members of our communications committee have found in contacting people by phone, that very few lack digital devices. Committee chair **Astri Thorvik** noted, however, that a small number “don’t want online access, they want classes in person.” Good news: Work is in progress to reopen those classrooms as soon as we can!

Talk about caring: In the context of volunteer appreciation week, MCLL is organizing two events in collaboration with SCS CATS (Career Advising and Transition Services). Join us on Tuesday, April 20, for a workshop on Meeting Needs, Building Solidarities, Learning to Organize Together: The Potential and Challenges of Mutual Aid, facilitated by **Ana Milic** and **Emanuel Guay**. Then on Thursday, April 22, MCLL volunteers **John Felvinci**, **Debbie Mercier**, **Marjorie Northrup** and **Brian Webber** will helm a panel discussion on Building a Culture of Caring. Our volunteers will share their perspectives on how we can physically distance ourselves to keep safe while continuing to learn, care about and for others, and maintain a feeling of belonging. Stay tuned for more details.

New learning ahead: Registration for our Spring session began March 30th but you can still sign up for lectures and study groups at mcgill.ca/mcll.

Study groups start April 12.



News, opinions and views on any MCLL-related topic are most welcome. Just contact Susan Purcell, the eBulletin editor, at suepurcell@videotron.ca, or call her at (514) 488-3503.

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