



125th ANNUAL REPORT
THE MAY COURT CLUB OF OTTAWA
2023 - 2024



Celebrating 125 Years of Service

THE MAY COURT CLUB OF OTTAWA

The **May Court Club of Ottawa** is a dynamic service club for women living in Ottawa and the surrounding region. It recently celebrated its 125th year of operation making it the oldest club of its kind in Canada. It has inspired the formation of eight other May Court clubs in Canada.

The Club has dedicated its services from its earliest days to the needs of the community, often in the field of health and welfare for women and children. Currently, the Club accommodates and supports the May Court Hospice, provides grants to community organizations, and awards scholarships to nurse practitioners and those enrolled in Information Studies. It operates the Bargain Box, a thriving thrift shop that serves as a community hub besides generating funds.

The May Court Club of Ottawa works to offer its members a sense of purpose through volunteerism, and a sense of belonging through association. Friendship is an integral part of the mix, and the handsome clubhouse in the Glebe provides a welcoming central location for interest and activity groups as well as a venue for fundraising events.



The Mandate: to engage exclusively in such charitable undertakings as deemed advisable by the Corporation.

The Mission Statement: to enrich the lives of others as well as our own.

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Donna Shields Poë

The past year has been a memorable one for the May Court Club of Ottawa. It included numerous accomplishments as well as special events related to the Club's 125th anniversary. I wish to thank all members for their participation in making them a success. It is agreed that we celebrated our 125th in style, and we are now on our way to the next quarter century and our 150th anniversary during which time we plan to continue "enriching the lives of others as well as our own."

In recognition of the Club's 125th anniversary, Mayor Mark Sutcliffe declared October 4, 2023, *May Court Club of Ottawa Day*. He presented a certificate to the Club at the Annual General Meeting of Hospice Care Ottawa that acknowledges the contributions it has made to the community over the past 125 years. It now hangs in the upper lounge of the Clubhouse.

Other 125th anniversary celebrations included: a Jerry Ariel extravaganza of flower arrangements and table settings; a successful Christmas Craft Market; the Remarkable Stylish Retrospective, a fashion review of the Club's history by decade from 1898 to 2024; and a Club gathering in May to signal the end of the Club's 125th year. The latter included members sharing a birthday cake iced with a depiction of the 125 crest and posing for a commemorative group photo. It should be noted that separate funds were raised to support these events so that the Club's charitable contributions continued unchanged.

In the interests of reconciliation, guest speaker and Spirit Keeper, Barbara Dumont-Hill, gave an enlightening talk in February on the experience of Indigenous people in Canada and on the significance of the smudge ceremony.

The Club is now on social media with a YouTube channel thanks to an enterprising and generous husband and our Communications Director. It is a pleasure to see the videos from earlier years as well as those of this year.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCC8rBoDU-pUB3XQxKRBH7YQ>

The Occupancy Agreement the Club has with Hospice Care Ottawa was renewed for a further five years. The agreement governs our relationship with Hospice Care Ottawa and the May Court Hospice site. It was renewed without changes, a testament to the positive relationship the two parties have in working together to resolve issues as they arise at the May Court Hospice.

The Bargain Box, the Club's principal fundraiser, continued on its path to recovery with earnings at, or above, pre-pandemic levels. It is run entirely by volunteers whose day-to-day commitment is a testament to the Club's ideals.

Mary Schoenfeld, the respected Club Secretary of nearly 26 years, retired at the end of June 2024. A new Office Administrator, Laura French, was hired to work 2 days a week.

This past year the income from the Bargain Box, the Aberdeen Artists and the investment portfolio have enabled the Club to support Hospice Care Ottawa as its principal benefactor, award three generous scholarships, and make donations to several agencies in Ottawa. Club members have every reason to be proud, and my thanks go out to all of them for making the Club such a strong addition to the Ottawa community.

It has been a privilege and honour to be the President of the May Court Club of Ottawa. My role was easier to fulfill because of the support shown me at every step of the way. The hands-on volunteerism of the Club, so exemplified by each member, shows their dedication to addressing community needs. As I look at the unfailing volunteers who have kept the Bargain Box on track since 1971, I see that spirit expressing itself every day. Others show it by convening or joining committees and/or taking on Board positions. As president, I have always felt that I was just one of many dedicated and committed volunteers carrying the May Court Club of Ottawa and its goals forward.

MAY COURT BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2023-24

Viceregal Patron: Her Excellency the Right Honorable Mary Simon

PAST PRESIDENT	Christine Beelen
PRESIDENT	Donna Shields-Poë
VICE PRESIDENT	Kathy Yach
RECORDING SECRETARY	Leslie Jones
CORRESPONDING SECRETARY	Barbara Hykle
TREASURER	Dorothy Scorsone
ASSISTANT TREASURER	Gill Puxty
MEMBER SERVICES DIRECTOR	Jenni Barbarie
COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR	Holly Hesper-Quirk
PROPERTY MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR	Zenia Leigh
SOCIAL DIRECTOR	Barbara Burton
BARGAIN BOX DIRECTOR	Patricia Sanders
DIRECTORS-AT-LARGE	Betty Rehbein
	DJ (Dorothy) Smith

PAST PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Christine Beelen

The main role of the Past President is to be a member of the Hospice Care Ottawa Board in an ex-officio capacity, a liaison between the two organizations. It is a worthwhile and ongoing learning experience for both parties. The Hospice Board is comprised of a group of dedicated, compassionate, and indeed, passionate people who give generously of their time to ensure that Hospice doors remain open.

The main achievement this year was the opening of Maison de l'Est in the east end of Ottawa. It took seven years of campaigning and filling out of forms to convince the "powers that be" that another location was needed, and one to address the francophone population. When staffing is complete, residential bed services for end-of-life care at Maison de L'Est will be available. Day and community programs are already in place.

Hospice Care Ottawa has almost returned to pre-pandemic levels of service, with 1,708 people served this year in all programs. That is significantly more than the 1,292 people served last year. The number of volunteers has also risen from 458 in 2022-23 to 717 this year.

This renewal could not have happened without the promise of government funding. Funding agreements, however, have time limits, so work began immediately to convince the Ministries involved that permanent funding is needed, and needed at a level that supports the true maintenance costs of residential beds.

Five May Court Club members participated in the *Hike for Hospice 2024* raising close to \$5,500 thanks to the sponsorship of other members and friends. The hope is that a larger May Court team will hike next year to help the Hospice meet its fundraising goal of more than \$2.5 million that is needed to meet the considerable increase in expenses from the new facility and rising food and staffing costs at all three sites.

Hospice Care Ottawa recognizes the May Court Club as "Sustaining Benefactor". The membership can take pride in enabling Hospice Care Ottawa to offer quality and compassionate end-of-life care to individuals and their families as well as bereavement programs to those left behind. Recently, two Club members were acknowledged for their years of volunteer service at May Court Hospice, Patricia Sanders for 20 years and Leslie Jones for 10 years.

It was an honour and privilege to be a member of the Hospice Board. I am also proud to have contributed to the May Court Club's ongoing success during my 10 years on its Board of Directors as well as in other capacities: Assistant Treasurer, Treasurer, Director of Communications, Vice President, President, and Past President. For now, I will continue as Editor of Behind the Pink Door, Co-ordinator of the Strategic Planning Exercise and member of the Archives Committee. I am not fading into the background so much as shifting away from the leadership table! I want to thank every one of you who helped me mature as a leader. Together we have made, and continue to make, a difference in our community. For that, I am always proud.

THE MAY COURT CLUB OF OTTAWA TREASURER'S REPORT

2023 Annual Financial Report

Dorothy Scorsone

This is the report for the fiscal year ending on December 31, 2023. The Club was audited in April 2024 by Hendry Warren LLP Chartered Professional Accountants. The 2023 audited statement was accepted by the Board of Directors on Thursday, May 23, 2024, and was presented to the membership at the June 12, 2024 Annual General Meeting.

As per the auditor, the audit of the financial statements is complete up to December 31, 2023. The audit opinion was a qualified opinion, as the completeness of fundraising revenues is not susceptible to satisfactory audit verification. This type of audit opinion is common amongst many not-for-profit organizations. The auditor concluded his presentation by stating that the May Court Club remains in a strong financial position with a good investment portfolio, and that the greatest risk factor is market volatility. The details of the audit are meant to be used in creating subsequent budgets. These management estimates are intended to guide financial decisions by the Board.

INCOME

• Investment Income (realized gains, interest, and dividends)	\$143,686
• Fundraising Income (Bargain Box, Aberdeen Artisans. and 125th Anniversary revenue)	\$182,711
• Bequests and donations	\$42,621
• Membership fees	\$15,570
• Apartment rental	\$17,810
• Social function income	\$1,690

Total gross profit of \$363,239 after fundraising costs of **\$40,849**. This reflects a 26.33% decrease from 2022, mainly caused by market volatility.

EXPENSES: Total expenses were \$511,592. This reflects an increase of 50% over 2022. The most significant of these were:

• Property maintenance costs	\$90,014
• Hospice donation	\$100,000
• 125 Anniversary donation to Crossroads Children's Mental Health Centre	\$125,000
• Scholarships	\$15,000
• Administrative expenses	\$80,706
• Communications expenses	\$40,290
• Professional fees	\$34,018

The markets started to improve in 2023, and an unrealized gain of **\$35,963** was earned by the end of the year. The Operating Fund portfolio closed at **\$3,883,502**, and the Scholarship Fund Portfolio that fully funded two Centennial Scholarships and the Susan Anderson Scholarship closed at **\$311,002**. Overall, this reflects a 0.04% decrease in investments from 2022. The Club must remain vigilant to maintain the Operating Fund portfolio at or above \$4 million to continue its support of the current level of spending. Rising costs may require re-evaluation of the desired level of the Operating Fund portfolio.

The net revenue loss for 2023, before unrealized gains, was \$148,353. When the unrealized gain of \$35,963 is included, the financial statement indicates a net revenue loss of \$112,390.

In 2023, the CRA disbursement quota increased from 3.5% to 5%. Based on the combination of charitable donations made in the year (\$240,000) and 98% of the property maintenance expenses, the Canada Revenue Agency’s charity disbursement quota (\$225,908) has been met and exceeded.

Donations to the Community

January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2023

1. Palliative Care	
Hospice at May Court	\$100,000
2. Education	
Susan Anderson Scholarship	\$5,000
Centennial Scholarship	\$10,000
3. Children	
Crossroads Children’s Mental Health Centre	\$125,000
Total Financial Aid	\$240,000

Note: The May Court Club of Ottawa also paid all of the property maintenance and repair expenses of the May Court Hospice.

MAY COURT CLUB OF OTTAWA

Statement of Financial Position

December 31, 2023, with comparative figures for 2022

	2023	2022
Assets		
Current assets		
Cash	\$ 90,366	\$ 96,063
HST rebate receivable	21,260	7,818
Inventory	3,415	3,415
Accrued receivables	43,783	12,446
Prepaid expenses	12,148	24,512
	170,972	144,254
Long-term investments (Note 2)	4,194,504	4,366,746
Capital assets (Note 3)	462,198	442,256
	\$ 4,827,674	\$ 4,953,256
Liabilities and Net Assets		
Current liabilities		
Accounts payable and accrued charges	\$ 19,518	\$ 32,157
Deferred revenue	9,200	9,753
	28,718	41,910
Commitments (Note 4)		
Net assets		
Invested in capital assets	462,198	442,256
Internally restricted for:		
May Court Club of Ottawa Centennial Scholarship	204,221	208,859
Unrestricted	4,132,537	4,260,231
	4,798,956	4,911,346
	\$ 4,827,674	\$ 4,953,256

Approved on behalf of the Board:

Director: _____

MAY COURT CLUB OF OTTAWA
Statement of Revenue and Expenses

Year ended December 31, 2023, with comparative figures for 2022

	2023	2022
Revenue		
Investment income (Note 5)	\$ 143,686	\$ 342,672
Fundraising projects revenue (Schedule A)	137,906	115,704
125th Anniversary revenue	44,805	-
Bequests and donations	42,621	36,998
Rental	17,810	17,376
Membership fees	15,570	15,990
Social functions	1,690	3,484
	404,088	532,224
Cost of Fundraising projects (Schedule A)	40,849	39,124
Gross Profit	363,239	493,100
Expenses		
Administrative	80,706	74,318
Amortization of capital assets	17,133	12,294
Building maintenance and utilities:		18,809
- Repairs	-	
- Routine	90,014	65,588
Communications	40,290	557
Delegate expenses and association dues	6,573	6,292
Donations	240,000	134,000
Professional fees	34,018	25,786
Social function expenses	2,858	4,094
	511,592	341,738
Net (expenses) revenue before unrealized gain (loss) on long-term investments	(148,353)	151,362
Unrealized gain (loss) on long-term investments	35,963	(532,035)
Net expenses over revenue	\$(112,390)	\$ (380,673)

COMMUNITY SERVICE REPORTS

BARGAIN BOX

Patricia Saunders

It has been another very busy year for the Bargain Box (BB) and all the volunteers. The donations have been exceedingly generous and kept the Monday Morning Ladies very busy sorting and displaying items for the Shop. The Cashier and Clerks have kept the shop open and operating for our customers.

The donations to our Community Projects are ongoing. We have added two such projects since last year. One local project is Good Neighbours Ottawa which helps to clothe the homeless in the Market area. We also donated items to Uganda for a Boys and Girls Club. We continue to make weekly deliveries to Debra Dynes, Salvation Army, and Clothing for Charity, Canadian Textile Recycling. The BB has also on two occasions helped Aids Committee Ottawa. The Sandy Hill Community Health Centre Sock Project also continues.

The Trans Saturdays have been very slow and did not continue through June and July.

In April, Stephanie Plante the Councillor for Sandy Hill visited the BB with her assistant Carina. They were interested in the recycling aspect of the Bargain Box and how we help the community. A video was made but it has not yet been posted to Councillor Plante's web site.

The BB helped to celebrate the 125th anniversary of the May Court Club. There was a special event at the store in March. We opened on a Sunday for a "Shop our Shop" and all Club members, family, and friends were invited. There was a special window that featured a Vintage Vignette to promote the Fashion Retrospective at the Club.

Donated items that are unusual and/or expensive are promoted and sold on Market Place. The items would be those that would not realize the best price at the store. The most recent are a collection of vintage miniature Toby Jugs.

The revenue from the Bargain Box for the current year to date is almost 2% less than this time last year.

The Manager of the BB was advised that during August the parking lot would be under construction to retrofit a hydro vault. This meant there would be no parking available for the volunteers. The landlord did offer to purchase two street parking permits. However, the permits are specific to a licence plate. The Manager decided to close the store for the month of August or until the construction is finished. There will therefore be no revenue for August.

SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

Bev MacSween

& Sharon Henry

The May Court Club of Ottawa annually offers three, \$5,000 scholarships. The Susan Anderson Memorial Scholarship is offered to a qualified student in the Masters of Information Studies at the University of Ottawa, the Masters of Information at the University of Toronto or the Masters of Library and Information Science at Western University. The two May Court Centennial Scholarships are awarded yearly to qualified nurses entering the first or second year of a Nurse Practitioner programme at an approved Ontario University.

This year's winners of the Centennial Scholarships are Bradley Boehringer, a student at the University of Ottawa, and Eva Ta, a student at York University.

The winner of the Susan Anderson Memorial Scholarship is Morghen Jael, who is studying at the University of Toronto.

MAY COURT HOSPICE RECEPTION DESK

Kerry DeBlois

There are currently 15 May Court members working at the Hospice reception desk. They worked a total of 545 volunteer hours from January 1 to June 30 of this year.

Serving as the receptionist is an important job for a volunteer for she is usually the first person with whom a visitor engages at this difficult time for both residents and their loved ones.

This spring has been a busy one at the reception desk as all Hospice programs have resumed and are running at full speed.

Many thanks to the May Court volunteers who work at the reception desk thereby supporting the caregivers, families, and all those who access the Hospice.

AFTER 5s

Nancy Birchard

The After 5s is a group of women who meet once a month after 5 pm to share friendship and pizza. Any May Court member is welcome to join either occasionally or on a regular basis.

The principal mandate is to support Club initiatives, one of which is the Valentine Gift Bag Project. For the past two years, the After 5's have filled and delivered gift bags to women in shelters on Valentine's Day. It is popular with both donors and recipients.

CLUB SERVICE REPORTS

MEMBER SERVICES COMMITTEE

Jenni Barbarie

In the past year, the Member Services Committee interviewed and welcomed five new members, maintained the membership data base, collected volunteer hours, and held an Education Meeting for the benefit of new members as well as those who welcomed the opportunity for a refresher, having joined during the pandemic.

As of June 2024, Club membership included 157 women: 41 Active members; 83 Associate members; 24 Life members and 9 Out-of-towners.

Active members and most Associate members continued to give generously of their time and efforts, again contributing over 11,000 volunteer hours to Club and community needs.

RECORDING SECRETARY

Leslie Jones

The Board of Directors of the May Court Club of Ottawa met regularly this past year on the fourth Thursday of every month from September to June, with the exception of December.

The Fall General Meeting took place Wednesday October 11, 2023, and the Spring General Meeting on Wednesday March 20, 2024.

The Club's 126th Annual General Meeting was a dinner meeting held on Wednesday, June 12, 2024, at the Hellenic Event Centre during which Board Reports were presented, and the slate of Directors for the 2024-25 year elected. The Articles of Amendment to Club Bylaws were tabled and approved. As well, the President was voted authorization by the membership to sign to file the Articles of Amendment as required in the **Not-for-Profit Corporations Act**.

ARCHIVES COMMITTEE

DJ Smith

The Archives Committee continues to work on cataloguing the existing archives with the goal of creating a finding aid that will make the contents more readily available. The Committee combed through many boxes looking for documents and photographs for use in a video history of the Club as part of the 125th Celebration.

Unfortunately, cataloguing had to be put on hold on several occasions when the basement was inaccessible due to water issues.

ABERDEEN ARTISTS

Gill Puxty

The pinnacle event for the Aberdeen Artisans during 2023-24 was the Christmas Craft Market. Considerable planning went into the event with wise decisions made to change the location from Aberdeen Hall to the main level of the clubhouse, and to abandon the tea service. Committee Members provided quality crafts (knitting, quilting, jewelry and other) and numerous members provided scrumptious baked goods. Donated fabric items from the Kanata Quilt Guild were also sold. Sales were brisk. Unsold crafts were offered for sale at the Christmas luncheon.

Aberdeen Artisans brought in over \$10,200 in Club revenue during 2023-24. Plans are underway to hold another spectacular craft sale in November 2024.

OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Barbara Hykle

The Board approved a motion to disband the Outreach Committee per se because its responsibilities are outdated. Communication with members is now done electronically including the delivery of annual reports, formerly hand delivered.

The Corresponding Secretary will continue to send letters, notes of condolence, and “thinking of you” notes on behalf of the Club.

Soup lunches were replaced by drop-in coffee gatherings hosted by the Corresponding Secretary or other Board members on mid-month Mondays. Other options for social functions such as the coffee gatherings are to be explored.

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

Holly Hesper-Quirk

The Communications Committee is responsible for keeping the Club members, as well the public, informed about the Club and its activities. Members receive quarterly newsletters, and the *Behind the Pink Door* bulletin is sent to members every two weeks (excluding summer). The Committee manages the website and keeps it up to date regarding the details of the Club, its events and activities, and community involvement. It also creates posts for the Club’s Instagram and Facebook page and monitors the activity. Weekly online posts are created to promote items for sale at the Bargain Box. In addition, the Communications Committee collects the various Club reports, and edits and compiles them for the Annual Report.

Flyers were created for the Club’s general meetings as well as the Christmas Craft Market, which was also promoted online through the website, Instagram and Facebook page. Online posts and flyers were created for guest speakers as well as for the MC125 events.

Thanks and appreciation go to the 2023-2024 Communication Committee Members:

Holly Heser-Quirk —Communications Director
Valerie Zinger —Facebook, Instagram, and Club Flyers
Jayne O'Brien —Annual Report, publicity
Nicole McKenna —Newsletter layout, formatting, text and photo compilation
Christine Beelen —*Behind the Pink Door* bulletins
Betty Rehbein —Website

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

Donna Shields Poë

for Zenia Lee

The May Court Club of Ottawa is in the enviable position of owning its large building set within scenic grounds on the Rideau River. It houses the Club's social rooms and offices and as such is the home of The May Court Club of Ottawa.

With such ownership, the Club is able to serve as a sustaining benefactor for Hospice Care Ottawa. The Club provides space within the building to accommodate the May Court Hospice and takes responsibility for maintaining that space to meet code requirements for healthcare facilities.

The age of the clubhouse and its extensions ranges from 80 to 115 years. It should be no surprise therefore, that property management of the building is expensive. However, property management costs have remained steady with no unexpected major expenses this past year. That being said, the budget is regularly stretched by: annual snow-clearing and maintenance costs for the large parking lots; servicing and maintenance of the extensive heating and ventilation systems; and regular inspections and, when necessary, containment of Asbestos Containing Materials (ACMs) throughout the building. We are fortunate to be covered by contracts with dedicated and experienced contractors in each of these areas.

The Club is confident that the building and its property, with careful maintenance, will serve us well for many years to come.

SOCIAL COMMITTEE

Barbara Burton

The Social Committee was responsible for the decorations and provision of food for the three May Court General Meetings, held in October, March, and June as well as the Christmas party, held in December. Three of the gatherings were held at the clubhouse with the decorations, food and service provided by Club members. The Fall General Meeting consisted of a cold buffet and the Spring General Meeting offered quiches and salads. The ever-popular Christmas party offered the traditional tea sandwiches and sweets. The Annual General Meeting in June, was a late afternoon meeting held at the Hellenic Event Centre, followed by an excellent Greek meal. Attendance at these events ranged between 40 and 65 members.

These social events are occasions for our members to connect in a relaxed and pleasant way with others whom they may not have seen for some time, It also gives our new members, who traditionally help with these events, an opportunity to meet and get to know other members.

The May Court Club continues to be strong and vibrant even after 125 years and the challenges of COVID-19. May Courters know how to prosper and how to have a good time!

FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE

Kathy Yach

An online auction was held in November 2023. Other money-generating events held during 2023-24 related to the 125th Anniversary celebrations, which the MC125 Committee funded: a Gerry Aerial demonstration in November 2023; a guest speaker, Barbara Dumont-Hill in February, and the Stylish Retrospective in April.

CHARITABLE GIVING COMMITTEE

A decision was made that in consideration of the special 125th Anniversary donation of \$125,000 to Crossroads Children's Mental Health in May, no other funds be dispersed during the 2023-24 period.

As of November 2024, grant application forms will be available to community organizations on the Club website (www.maycourt.org) under Charitable Giving, and by calling the Club at 613-733-4681.

SPECIAL EVENTS



May Court of Ottawa 125th Anniversary Chair,

Margie Howsam,

In May 2022, the May Court 125 Committee (MC125) was established and began working to ensure that the Club's anniversary year was a memorable one. They wanted members to be filled with pride as they celebrated our history, our service, and our many friendships.

The Committee's first task was to decide on an appropriate recipient for our anniversary donation of \$125,000. Thirty organizations were identified as potentially worthy, and the research began. After much discussion and assessment, Crossroads Children's Mental Health Centre, was deemed the right recipient. The Board approved the selection, as did the membership at large.

Next was the decision as to the commemorative items to be made available to members. A unique MC125 design was agreed upon, and orders placed for decorative pins and pens bearing it. Sales were brisk and the items have been worn or used by members with pride.

A MC125 lunch held at the Museum of Nature in May 2023 ensured the Club's anniversary year got off to a great start. Members, family, and friends participated enthusiastically in capacity numbers.

An anniversary video covering the Club's history was developed and first shown at the lunch. Some viewers commented on how much they learned about the Club. Others remarked on the renewed sense of pride it gave them. The Committee felt justly rewarded for the hours spent planning, writing the narration, doing the voiceovers, searching in the Archives for photos, and the final editing and polishing. The video will serve many other audiences in the future. It can currently be viewed on the Club website www.maycourt.org.

A slideshow of many photos of May Court members, past and present, was also developed and shown at the 125 Lunch. It can be used, with adaptations and updates, many times in the future.

The Bargain Box has been a loyal supporter of MC125 and held a *Shopping Our Shop* event for members and friends in March 2024 when quality items at good prices were made available in sociable circumstances.

In November 2023, renowned florist Gerry Arial entertained members with demonstrations of unusual flower arrangements and table settings. In April, former Club member Holly Laroque was the lead in the Remarkable Stylish Retrospective, a fashion review of the Club's history by decade from 1898 to 2024. The finale to MC125 on May 1, 2024, was the sharing of a birthday cake with the May Court logo depicted in the icing, and a commemorative group photo taken outside the Club's distinctive pink door. It was a memorable ending to a memorable year!

Thanks go to each and every Committee member who worked so diligently to ensure the success of the MC125 celebrations: Janet Banigan, Christine Beelen, Mary Jones, Holly Hesper-Quirk, Gloria Macklin, Helen Marjos, Nancy Pyper, Mary Schoenfeld, Polly Ann Sobier, DJ Smith, Donna Shields-Poë, Kathy Yach, as well as Sharon Murphy who contributed by Zoom, email, and phone all the way from Bowmanville. Other Club members, too numerous to mention, also helped and in many different ways, and several people gave donations. No Club funds were used for the celebrations other than the \$125,000 gift. In fact, the Committee had a surplus of \$6,000 at the end of June to add to the Club's coffers. All in all, it was a successful two years, creating lasting memories for our members.

125 Years of Service Thanks to the Vision of Lady Aberdeen

The May Court Club's origins in 1898 relate to the vision of Lady Aberdeen, the wife of Canada's Governor General at the time. She had a keen eye for social causes and used her position to address local needs, which in a relatively new country were many. During her five previous years working alongside her husband, Lady Aberdeen observed that the mature daughters of the wealthier citizens were not engaged in much beyond the search for suitable husbands. She was clever in the manner she found to challenge that waste of talent. She and Lord Aberdeen hosted an elaborate May Day celebration for the wealthier citizens and their daughters on the grounds of Rideau Hall during which a May Day Queen was crowned. In her opening address, Lady Aberdeen encouraged the young women present to commit themselves to lives of service both within their homes and in society. Her message was heard in that glamorous setting. The May Court Club came into being shortly thereafter, and within a few years, the membership was extended to women of all ages. May Court members are grateful to Lady Aberdeen for her call to action at that May Day celebration some 125 years ago.

The Strategic Planning Exercise has been underway since 2019, beginning with an initial survey of members. During the pandemic, the Board continued to work on identifying areas in which the Club should direct its efforts in order to strengthen its position in the community. In 2023, a town hall meeting was held at which a number of areas of focus were identified. This past March, a group of nine members gathered to discuss the Club's Strategic Plan Exercise. We reviewed the action plans set out in January 2023, and discovered that while we had not met those plans exactly, we had achieved a great deal just the same. In the conversation, we agreed that for now the exercise needs to be re-framed so that we invest some time directing our work toward goals that may be key to our future. A strategic plan is a necessary document, but it won't help if we don't take care of the members we have now. So, we put aside a detailed review of the plan to see where we should direct our immediate attention.

To meet the overall objective of the Club, which is to be a service organization, we need to identify new volunteer opportunities for our members in addition to those that are available now. The intention is to not only retain members by providing a way for them to contribute their talents, but also attract new members – an active club is an attractive club! We are, therefore, looking for community groups that may need additional volunteer hands to help them meet their goals.

Members of the group who met are looking at Volunteer Ottawa listings, the school boards, Canadian Blood Services, women's shelters, immigrant integration services etc. for possibilities. We are also interested in hearing about organizations where our members are currently working as volunteers. Could that organization use some extra help from time to time or even regularly from a group of May Court members? The Club's participation, of course, is not a given. Any volunteer opportunity parameters would have to be presented to, and approved by, the Board of Directors.

The ancillary discussion revolved around possible social activities of the Club – opportunities for members to gather for some other reason than volunteer or fundraising activities, or formal meetings. The group identified that we have a beautiful building and meeting rooms that should be used. The After 5s have it all rolled into one – social, service, and pizza! The Monday Coffee Hours have proven quite popular among a number of members. The Aberdeen Artisans have also held Crafts and Conversation meetings. Options considered were reading circles, cards or board games, speakers, events that would bring people together as members of the same Club. Could we organize visits to galleries, museums, and gardens? What about day trips? Can we make small steps toward these kinds of collective get-togethers that could provide us more collegiality, more togetherness?

The intention is to meet in the fall of 2024 to determine next steps.

THE ASSOCIATION OF MAY COURT CLUBS

Kathy Yach

Club delegates Donna Shields-Poë, Kathy Yach and Christine Beelen attended the Annual General Meeting of the Association of May Court Clubs of Canada in Windsor April 19 – 21, 2024. Business meetings were held on the Friday, and the AGM dinner on the Saturday with guest speaker Mary Jean Gallagher who is the retired Director of Education of the Greater Essex District School Board. She gave suggestions on how to make our clubs more successful by looking for new ways to move forward and recruit members. She shared a number of ideas.

The programs were interesting on both days, as the issues and challenges addressed are common to most May Court clubs:

- Dealing with the requirements and advisories of the Ontario's Not-for-Profit Corporations Act (ONCA) - revision of Bylaws, development of a Policies & Procedure brochure and a Code of Conduct and Conflict Resolution Procedure.
- Recruiting new members.
- Member retention.
- Succession planning/recruiting members to sit on the Boards.
- Marketing by Facebook / web sites / printed publications.
- Visibility in the communities.
- Shop updates.

There were many suggestions. Here are a few:

- Hire a lawyer to help with ONCA. Allow for a considerable wait time when submitting anything to the federal government.
- Go to local businesses and request an opportunity to make a presentation to employees to incite interest in joining.
- In the context of older member retention, host a special get together for them to address their transportation needs.

Motion:

- That the Fall 2024 meeting be on Zoom to save money.
- That the President and Secretary -Treasurer of the Association not necessarily visit each club in the future as is customary. Virtual or hub meetings be held as a cost saving alternative.

Fall Meeting agenda Item: Consideration of a 2024-25 membership fee increase.

The next Annual General Meeting will be held in London, Ontario

ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2023-24

Past President	Donna Samuels, Oakville
President	Cindy Pop, Oakville
Vice President	Christine Beelen, Ottawa
Secretary-Treasurer	Joan Price, Oakville
Director at Large	Anne Wilson, Barrie

MAY COURT CLUBS of CANADA MEMBERS

May Court Club of Barrie
May Court Club of Brockville
May Court Club of Chatham
May Court Club of Kitchener-Waterloo
May Court Club of London
May Court Club of Oakville
May Court Club of Ottawa
May Court Club of St Catharines
May Court Club of Windsor

PAST PRESIDENTS – MAY COURT CLUB of OTTAWA

*Deceased

1898-1900 Miss Ethel Hamilton*	1954-1956 Mrs Robert Gill*
1900-1902 Mrs Edward Fauquier*	1956-1958 Mrs Harold Mulkins*
1902-1904 Lady Perley*	1958-1960 Mrs Manson Campbell*
1904-1906 Mrs Robert Kernan*	1960-1962 Mrs Eric Prime*
1906-1908 Lady Sybil Middleton*	1962-1964 Mrs Lloyd B. Rochester*
1908-1909 Mrs Robert Kernan*	1964-1966 Mrs David Hazelgrove*
1909-1910 Miss Florence Fielding*	1966-1968 Mrs P.D. Holt*
1910-1911 Mrs Gordon Hewitt*	1968-1970 Mrs J.H.F. Kenny*
1911-1912 Miss Mary Scott*	1970-1972 Mrs W.F.A. Davies
1912-1913 Lady Perley*	1972-1974 Mrs W.P. Power*
1913-1916 Miss Edith MacPherson*	1974-1976 Mrs Ian McDiarmid
1916-1918 Mrs Robert Kernan*	1976-1978 Mrs Joan Prime*
1918-1920 Miss Sarah Sparks*	1978-1980 Mrs Mary Elizabeth Harris*
1920-1921 Mrs Lennox Blackburn*	1980-1982 Mrs Marian Parry*
1921-1922 Miss Margaret Southam*	1982-1984 Mrs Ellen Lahey*
1922-1923 Mrs Massy Baker*	1984-1986 Mrs Kay Yeomans*
1923-1925 Mrs Louise White*	1986-1988 Mrs Patricia Scott
1925-1927 Mrs Noulan Cauchon*	1988-1990 Mrs Joyce Clarkson
1927-1928 Mrs H.P. Hill*	1990-1992 Mrs Nancy Carruthers*
1928-1929 Miss Gwendolyn Burn*	1992-1994 Mrs Isabel Pepler*
1930-1933 Miss Freda Fripp*	1994-1996 Mrs Patricia Burroughs*
1933-1934 Mrs Selwyn Wilson*	1996-1998 Mrs Leslie Boyce
1934-1936 Mrs Arthur Hardy*	1998-2000 Mrs Susan Lahey*
1936-1937 Mrs Francis Gill*	2000-2002 Mrs Lillian Smith
1937-1938 Mrs C.A. Gray*	2002-2004 Mrs Mary Frances McIntyre*
1938-1939 Miss Ethel Beament*	2004-2006 Dr Margaret D. Bell*
1939-1940 Mrs I. Perley Robertson*	2006-2008 Barbara Hykle
1940-1941 Mrs C.H. Blair*	2008-2010 Margie Howsam
1941-1943 Mrs John Aylen*	2010-2012 Jose Hamilton
1943-1945 Mrs Douglas Blair*	2012-2014 Sharon Murphy
1945-1947 Mrs Herbert F. Gordon*	2014-2016 Margie Howsam
1947-1948 Mrs H.R.T. Gill*	2016-2018 Nancy Pyper
1948-1950 Mrs M.C. Christensen*	2018-2020 Dorothy Scorsone
1950-1952 Mrs Gordon Medcalf*	2020-2022 Christine Beelen
1952-1954 Mrs Melville Rogers*	2022-2024 Donna Shields-Poë

FORMER PATRONS

Mary Caroline, Countess of Minto
Alice, Countess Grey
H.R.H. Princess Louise Marguerite, Duchess of Connaught
Evelyn Emily Mary, Duchess of Devonshire
Marie Evelyn, Viscountess Byng of Vimy
Marie Adelaide, Marchioness of Willingdon
Roberte, Countess of Bessborough
Susan Charlotte, Lady Tweedsmuir
H.R.H. Princess Alice, Countess of Athlone
Margaret Diana, Viscountess Alexander of Tunis
The Rt. Hon. Vincent Massey, C.H., P.C., D.C.L., LL.D.
The Hon. Pauline Vanier, P.C., C.C.
Mrs Norah Michener, C.C., Ph.D.
Madame Gabrielle Léger, C.C.
Mrs Lily Schreyer, C.C.
The Rt. Hon. Jeanne Sauvé, P.C., C.C., C.M.M., C.D., LL.D.
Mrs Gerda Hnatyshyn, C.C.
Mrs Diana Fowler Leblanc, C.C.
The Rt. Hon. Adrienne Clarkson, C.C., C.M., C.D.
The Rt. Hon. Michaëlle Jean, C.C., C.C.M., C.O.M., C.D.
Mrs. Sharon Johnston, C.C.
Julie Payette CC CMM COM CQ CD

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