

# INSPIRING WOMEN

*Who Would Have  
Thought?*



November 2022, Volume 6 Issue 4

## 74 Our Cover Picture

### "Let Them Eat Cake!"

**Joanna Loizou** is a trained chef but a self-taught baker. She has made the transition from a professional chef to a cake-loving, self-employed business owner.

## 8 Art Lecturer + Au Pair = Toymaker!

**Jessica Mancuso** describes how her artistic studies and life experiences brought her to create "Gus & Ollie".



## 28



### Putting the Pieces Together

**Suzanne MacNeil** shares her journey from one adult ed mosaic art class to traveling throughout Europe to learn from the mosaic masters.

## 14



### "Capping" Off a Lifelong Dream

**Deborah Kase Lillian**, a devotee of fashion from an early age, is beginning a new phase of her life as the chief milliner of her own line of hats.

## 46



### Books Open Worlds

**Karen Boeker** reveals how her love of books framed her life of advocacy for reading as a teacher and organizer of an award-winning German cultural project.

## 22

### Dancing Across the Continents

**Lesley Klewinghaus** dances her way through life, from student and owning her own studio to winning a world title.



## 52

### From the Ruins, Recognition of a Heritage Arises

**Bénédicte Bodard** began a mission to save historic tiles discarded due to building renovations. She has turned them into coveted decorative pieces and more.



## 20

### Inspired Reader

In October we launched our newest initiative, a quiz to find the Inspired Reader for each issue.



#### Announcing the Inspired Reader



If you think you could be the next *Inspiring Women* Inspired Reader why not make a note of the next date now!  
The quiz will be launched on Facebook and via the FAWCO publication *News in Brief* on **December 6th**, with entries due on **Fri 11am E.T.**

## 37

### 24 Hours: Dublin

Who best to tell us about the best places to visit in a new city than those who live there? AWCD board members take us on a whistle stop tour of Dublin.



## 59



### A Club Inspires: AIWC Genoa

**Ann De Simoni**, of AIWC Genoa, introduces her club to us. AIWC Genoa is one of eight clubs in FAWCO's Region 8.

## 79

### Inspiring Reads- Odyssey of Love: A Memoir of Seeking and Finding

**Linda Jämsén's** memoir tells the story of what happened to her along the way.



## 87

### The Importance of Social Connections

**Chris Czyszczewski** and her family have lived all over the world. But they decided that for the sake of family connections the right place to settle was near their adult children.



64

### Knitting Support and Healing to "Uplift" Cancer Survivors

Mieke Prins knits along with *Caring Hands* to "uplift" cancer survivors.



68

### Playing Music, Hearing a New Song

Heather O'Donnell was a concert pianist until chronic pain forced her to pivot her passion to become a psychologist specializing in aiding performers.



82

### Giving Love with Bear Hugs

Elyzabeth Simpson rediscovers her love of knitting taught to her by her late mother. Starting with one toy bear as a gift, she now knits them for an HIV project.



### in every issue

5 A Note from the Editor

6 Advertisers Index

7 Introducing This Issue

89 Inspiring You

90 More About This Issue

91 Our Next Issue

92 That's Inspired!



"Books train your imagination to think big." - Taylor Swift.

"If you are going to get anywhere in life you have to read a lot of books." - Roald Dahl.

"Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body." - Joseph Addison.

Usually I write in this column about the magazine as a whole. I hope you will forgive me if this time I just focus on one new *Inspiring Women* feature we have created for you. As many of you will know already, the FAWCO Target Program for 2022-2025 focuses on empowering women and girls to ensure a sustainable future. Amanda Drollinger (AWC Central Scotland) is the Target Program Chair ([target5-environment@fawco.org](mailto:target5-environment@fawco.org)) and Tharien van Eck (AWC Antwerp) is the Target Project Selection Chair ([target-application@fawco.org](mailto:target-application@fawco.org)).

In January 2023, the shortlisted projects from all those submitted will be announced, with FAWCO clubs being asked to vote on their preference in February. Then at the Biennial Conference in March 2023, we will hear which project has been chosen. If you are interested in learning more, then check out the pages on the FAWCO website [Target Program 2022-2025](#) and/or sign up for a monthly bulletin to get regular updates.

Here at *Inspiring Women* HQ we thought we could have some fun together and, at the same time, support what will be a very worthy cause and project.

So in October we launched our new quiz to find our most "Inspired Reader". The deadline for the first quiz has passed but there will be four quizzes each year, each one being published a few weeks after the latest issue has been launched.

The first quiz was five short, multiple choice questions which were answered on a special Google Form. It was distributed via Facebook (have you liked our



### a note from the editor

page yet by the way?) and the regular *News in Brief* publication that goes out. All the answers to the questions were to be found by reading the latest issue.

If you turn to page 20 you will see that, whilst we had five correct entries, we drew one name out of a hat and have awarded "Inspired Reader" status accordingly. We are pleased that we have been able to obtain funding to offer a \$50 donation each issue to the Target Project in the name of our "Inspired Reader".

I think every entry to the quiz is a small way for you, our readers, to support the environment yourself via the Target Project, so we would really like to encourage as many of you as possible to get involved and do the quiz after each issue.

There are so many environmental issues in the world, it can be quite overwhelming to know where to start. So why not consider doing this quiz as a small gift from you to the environment? Hope you enjoy taking part in the next one, which we will release after Thanksgiving. On that note, wishing you and yours a happy and joyful celebration.

Best wishes!

Liz  
[Inspiringwomen.editor@fawco.org](mailto:Inspiringwomen.editor@fawco.org)

Doing our bit by only giving our grandson Tristan pre-loved toys, books and clothes. He doesn't care a bit and it's so much better for the world.

## advertisers index

# ready, set, SHOP!

We appreciate your support of our advertisers

### Janet Darrow Real Estate p. 19

Around the corner or a world away, contact Janet Darrow, FAUSA member, to find the best properties. FAWCO referrals to Janet help the Target Program!

### London & Capital p. 21

Whether you are a US Citizen living abroad or a foreign entity with US reporting, their dedicated teams take care of your wealth, giving you time to concentrate on the things that matter to you. London & Capital has been supporting FAWCO since 2016.

### The Pajama Company p. 27

The Pajama Company, founded by Ellie Badanes, member of FAUSA and AW Surrey, sells pajamas that are cozy, cheerful and available online!

### The Short List p. 45

Founded in 2001, The Short List is dedicated to inspiring passion in young adults and helping them achieve their college dreams. Admission, applications and test prep guidance available.

### The Existential Traveller p. 57 NEW!

Owned by FAUSA member Linda Johnson, offers bespoke cultural experiences. Contact her to arrange a dream vacation.

### London Realty Intl. p. 57

London Realty Intl. is owned by AWC London member Lonnée Hamilton, who is a worldwide property consultant. Her firm works with the best agents across the globe to fulfill your property needs.

### TASIS p. 62

The American School in England TASIS England is a leading international day and boarding school (ages 3-18) located 35 minutes from central London on a beautiful campus in Thorpe, Surrey.

Throughout the years FAWCO has relied on advertisers and sponsors to augment its income. This revenue has allowed FAWCO to improve services and gives it the flexibility to try the latest innovations to enhance the FAWCO experience. FAWCO's advertising partners believe in our mission and support our goals. Some directly support our activities and projects.

We encourage club leadership throughout the FAWCO network to share our publications with their membership. Our advertising partners have valuable products and services and we want your members to take advantage of what they offer. Please support them!

For more information on these advertisers or if you have any questions about FAWCO's advertising program, please contact Elsie Bose: [advertising@fawco.org](mailto:advertising@fawco.org).



## introducing this issue

To be honest, I was not sold on this theme when we first discussed it last year. I thought it would be too unwieldy and that accomplishments or achievements cited would not be easily recognized by the reader. One might say that I simply couldn't get my head around it. The team patiently and repeatedly insisted this could be a very interesting issue. I demurred for a while but with only one vote, I acquiesced to the team's decision.

There is no clever way to admit that I was wrong about this theme. I was SO wrong. These are terrific stories of lives that read either like a love story or a mystery novel. In the love stories, our heroines knew very early on what they were passionate about or had a talent for and their life journeys were in pursuit of living their dream. In the case of the mystery novels, our heroines started life in one direction but the twists and turns along the way led them to discover something new to try, and to be. I was intrigued: How will it turn out? The endings do not disappoint. And these stories are not unwieldy at all, because you'll see how the sum total of these women's lives lead them to a certain moment of joy that we all understand and hope to have some day.

As always, the magazine spans the FAWCO world with interesting features that reflect passion and mystery. Our club feature this month is AIWC of Genoa - when you think of passion, you think of Italy! And we spend 24 hours in Dublin- a city full of mystery and fun.

Finally, I believe that as you read these stories you might be inspired to give that interesting idea you often think about pursuing another look. Life is exciting when you give yourself the chance to follow your bliss!

Elsie  
Founder

# Art Lecturer + Au Pair = Toymaker!

Jess Mancuso, a member of AWC Hamburg, describes how her artistic studies and life experiences brought her to create “Gus and Ollie.”



Jess Mancuso and one of her sock animals.

I had one of those childhoods in the suburbs of Melbourne, Australia, that one dreams about, I suspect. Streets lined with enormous old gum trees, whose gum nuts would often get stuck in my roller skates or make me keel over in bare feet. I was able to ride my bike through the park to the Milk Bar without caution, its streamers blowing in the wind. I grew up playing with the other lucky kids living in our neighborhood but also loved visiting the elderly couples, always ready to pass on their wisdom and guidance.

Filled with fond memories of summer holidays at the beach, winter holidays in the snow, and making fairy gardens at home, I know I was lucky. All these experiences have shaped my view of the world. As the magic of childhood fades as we grow older, it makes me even more grateful to know what I had.

### After leaving home

I knew I wanted to study something creative at university but I wasn't initially accepted. My backup plan was a BA in Early Childhood Studies at the University of Melbourne, but my heart was always elsewhere. I studied and worked in childcare to support myself. Each year I applied to art school, but each year I was rejected.

So I decided to be an *au pair* in Yonkers, New York. My memories of this time are fond: the children, the city, and the friends I made. It also gave me the opportunity to take

One of Jess's Gus and Ollie animals posed in front of the store that Jess runs with four other women.



Advanced Anatomy Drawing classes under the expert tuition of Anthony Palumbo at the Art Students League of New York, an NYC institution. Walking those halls, I suddenly felt at home. It was the ultimate NYC experience. I sat between seasoned professionals, college students and a 90 plus year-old lady in her fur coat who'd never left NYC. I was the 21-year-old rookie from Australia, who they welcomed with open arms.

I returned home knowing I needed to go to art school. To support myself, I worked retail in art

In 2006 I met my future husband, Adrian, in Melbourne, not long before he was leaving to live and work at UCLA in California. For 18 months, I continued my career and studies in Melbourne while Adrian was in LA, but it was clear we both wanted to be in the same place at the same time. Adrian was offered a job in Hamburg, Germany, so we decided to take a leap of faith and moved to Hamburg together.

We are so lucky to be surrounded by friends we call family. A huge part of that I owe to the American Women's Club of Hamburg. I soon became a regular attendee of our "Stich 'n' Bitch!" Group and later its coordinator. I have also been a Hamburger Helper for the last 12 years, served on the board multiple times, was an active member of the Heart Pillow Project, and recently started a Photography Group with my fellow member and friend Jordan, who nominated me for this article.

**Involvement in your hobby and passion**

Moving to Hamburg finally gave me the luxury of time and space to

delve into an area I had been thinking about for some time: one-of-a-kind handmade soft toys for children. I never expected it would turn into a small business, but after family and friends placed orders and asked to buy my toys, it seemed to be the inevitable next step. The online handmade platform Etsy was in its infancy, which helped lead to the inception of my label "Gus and Ollie."

Over the last 12 years, I have built up my handmade business here, culminating in being chosen to join "Lital" in 2019, a tiny shop in Hamburg-Ottensen, which I run with four other female artists. We all sell our handmade wares and share the running and responsibilities of our

shop. It has given my label and my life here a boost by motivating me each and every day to improve ideas and my German language skills! I love seeing my handmade goodies go home with our friendly customers, who value the time, effort and love put into each and every one.

I simply loved having the time and space to experiment and perfect the craftsmanship you now find in my work. My husband can attest to the fact that the very first toys needed some tweaking. Having worked out all those kinks and turned them into the product they are today feels great.

I think my BA in Fine Art: Drawing underpins everything I do. I am not only the creator of my brand, but also the photographer, the editor, the copywriter, the designer and the buyer; plus I do all my own marketing and administration. My university degree fostered all of



A Gus and Ollie creature enjoys a sunny day. (above)



Jess and husband, Adrian. (left)

The beginnings of a new stuffed toy. (below)

supplies during the week and with framing on the weekends. I attended life drawing classes at night to prepare my portfolio for admission. Finally I was accepted into a Bachelor of Fine Art: Drawing at RMIT, and graduated with Honors. The following year I was invited back to become a lecturer in the Drawing Department, working alongside those I had learned from and who had inspired me so much.

**Life changes**

Throughout my 20s in Melbourne, I was living my dream as an exhibiting artist in Melbourne and Sydney, teaching in the Drawing Department at RMIT and Beaumaris Art Society while nannying some of my favorite little people, continuing my studies in Masters of Arts Administration and running my own successful handmade bookbinding business. I was busy seven days a week and loved every facet of the life I had created; no day was the same.





Colorful characters inspire creative play for children. (left)

The Gus and Ollie gang pose for their portrait! (below)

these critical skills but also gave me the confidence to believe in my own abilities. Having a background knowledge of how things were crafted throughout history in drawing, sculpture or painting helps to refine one's ability to move from a purely cognitive idea one to a physical one.

#### **Taking your hobby to the next level**

Given the encouragement from those around me as well as the time and space it took to perfect my work, taking orders and selling was the inevitable next step. It was something I was doing back in Melbourne with my bookbinding business already, so it didn't feel particularly courageous. However, looking back, I suppose it was. I think that's the secret, just take the next step

and see what happens. It might work or it might not, but you'll never know if you don't try.

#### **Will your work contribute to a better world for us all?**

This is something very close to my heart. I know I don't make a huge difference to the planet on a global scale, but making someone smile or watching a child love one of my creations until it's almost unrecognizable gives me a great sense of pride. I continue to look for ways I can give back in the realm of what I do, so I almost always donate to our FAWCO Silent Auction at the end of each year and quite often donate a portion of my earnings to the FAWCO Target Project. Getting out of bed each day, knowing I am contributing to the

world, even if only in a very small way, makes being an artist worthwhile.

#### **Biggest challenges**

An obvious challenge moving to Hamburg was the language, which made it more difficult to learn the culture and how things operate here. Everything that comes with running a business, from photography to taxes, is more difficult in a foreign language, but with a lot of effort, stamina and a little help from my friends, I'm really proud of what I achieved.

Two of the other biggest challenges when working for yourself are combating the isolation and staying motivated. Some days are easier than others, but when setting your own goals and deadlines, it's sometimes hard to keep up the momentum. I think I have managed to

overcome some of this by staying connected with my friends, the local community and with other creatives who are struggling with the same hurdles. It helps to support each other and I have been fortunate to have this support at every turn.

#### **Inspiring others**

Apart from perhaps sharing my passion through my social media channels in the hope it may inspire someone to follow their passion, teaching is my favorite way to inspire others to do what they love. Whether it be small children splashing paint around the room or a group of adults lacking the confidence to know that everyone offers their own unique perspective, there is so much joy in watching others find a passion for the creative arts and crafts.

#### **What the future holds**

Unfortunately, this stage in our lives is coming to an end very soon. As I write this, we are four short weeks away from permanently leaving Hamburg for our next adventure together in Oxfordshire, England. It will be an end of an era for both of us respectively. I hope the future sees many new opportunities for both of us to contribute to the world around us, one of our core values in life. Perhaps a slightly slower pace in the English countryside might lend itself to other creative endeavors I have been neglecting. I would like to get back into life drawing or ceramics and perhaps even have a solo exhibition one day. I only hope the city slicker in me will cope in a small village setting without a cafe! If you'd like to stay up to date with my adventures in England, you can follow me on Instagram @gusandollie.

#### **Childhood story that best explains the person you are today**

In the sixth grade, I was invited to multiple birthday parties of kids in first grade. I was the kid who knew everyone's name and made sure everyone was ok, no matter their age or background. I feel like I have spent my life surrounded by friends, family, colleagues, mentors and students of all ages. Some of my best friends are the same age as my mother or grandmother, while others are the same age as my niece. I've never focused on age, I only look at the person. I guess it's something I have always done.



# “Capping” Off A Lifelong Dream

*Deborah Kase Lillian, a member of AAWE Paris, a devotee of fashion from an early age, is beginning a new phase of her life as the chief milliner of her own line of hats.*



Deborah Lillian in one of her own hats, a red crushed velvet lined with faux shearling.

**I** moved from Manhattan to Connecticut as a young child and was fortunate to have a solid and positive home life. Both my parents were educators, and I always felt a little embarrassed about my fascination with the more superficial elements of society: namely, the worlds of the fashion and beauty industries. Although my beloved Mom was resolutely anti-fashion, she harbored a guilty passion for hats. She taught me to knit and nurtured my early clothing obsession with sewing lessons and trips to the fabric store. Despite her own lack of interest in clothes, she nevertheless would indulge my deep needs and yearnings for a new skirt to wear to school the next day – driving me, clearing the kitchen table so I could pin and cut, and staying up late with me swearing at the sewing machine. It was my grandma, though, a striking and eccentric New Yorker who consistently wore hats with élan and style, whom I credit with instilling my own love for all things millinery-related. She loaned me her hats and I wore them with reverence.

### **After leaving home**

Leaving New Haven as soon as I could meant university in New York City. It was an ideal place for the non-student that I was ... my dorm was a ten-minute subway ride from Lincoln Center and cheap seats for students were easily obtained. Henri Bendel and Bergdorf Goodman

**Jesse Smith,** daughter of rock icon Patti Smith, in a Harris Pat hat.



were just a bit further south, and I savored my wanders through those grand emporiums as much as I did throughout the Met and MoMA. College was FUN! In my senior year, I began working at the NY offices of Neiman-Marcus, coordinating editorial credits with the magazines that were my most-loved reading material. Through a series of serendipitous events, I ended up starting a job at *Vogue*

while I was taking my final exams. I barely remember the day in June of 1980 that I took off to graduate. The decade that followed was one of exhilarating challenges, working hard and playing harder.

### Life changes

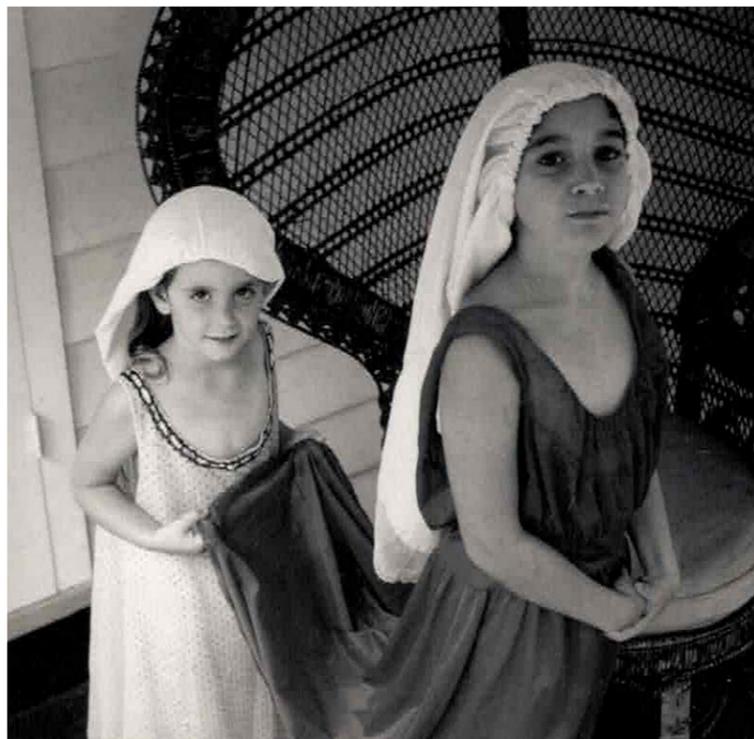
As the 80s concluded, I “settled down” and began building my family. I stopped salaried work and discovered the fulfillment of volunteer service. Moving to the suburbs meant community work, synagogue, and my kids’ cooperative school combined to fill the days and years with gratifying activity. Fast forward to the late 90s, and we decided our kids needed to learn another language and culture. Voilà! We moved to Paris, recklessly determined to have a two-year adventure. I write this 24 years later, reflecting on what was an annual default to succumbing to the seduction of this sensational city. I still consider it the center of the world of fashion and feel lucky to be here to start my business.

### Involvement in your hobby and passion

So I’ve always loved hats and have had a long-held, unspoken dream of making them and adorning people in the most fetching and flattering headwear. I began taking classes at a technical/ vocational school in *chapellerie* to learn how to do just that. Those hours spent in the studio learning the skills of this centuries-old craft were the happiest I’d spent in a long time.

No matter that the hours were at night, after I’d dutifully performed my day job obligations. (I teach English as a second language to adults.) Pretty much any *métier* in France – but especially one related to the field of fashion – is taught painstakingly and with meticulous attention to process AND product. The famously demanding pedagogy that French schools are known for exists in every learning environment and this was no exception. It was rigorous, and I embarrassed myself by weeping during my final exam, where I’d hoped to attain my professional certification as a *modiste*.

Deborah, in Grandma’s hat. (top left)  
Sisters playing brides. (bottom left)



Hard at work on her latest creation. (right)

Voilà! Finished products – direct from France. (below)

### Training and education

Alas, that dream is on hold for another year. When I registered for that exam, I learned that my American Ivy League B.A. was insufficient as basic scholastic preparation. It was mandatory that I pass exams in all academic subjects: Mathematics, Geography, Physics, Chemistry, History, etc. Including French. And English. I also needed to demonstrate knowledge of workplace safety and civic competence. Well, I studied so determinedly for the academics, worked myself into such a frenzy (Math??? Physics??? I was a 60-year-old homemaker, for goodness’ sake!), that I surprised myself by acing them. Unfortunately, the anxiety that drove me to that success proved to be my undoing – I did not obtain my CAP for *chapellerie*. My hands shook so badly that my stitches were messy, my cutting lines imperfect, and my work generally substandard. No CAP for me. Yet.

### Taking your hobby to the next level

So, just after acquiring the skills to make hats, COVID-19 swept in and changed the world forever. I was in New York when France closed its borders and spent seven long months there waiting for them to open again. I had hoped to start my business by the end of 2020 but was stranded without my tools and equipment. (Hat-making involves lots of lovely equipment acquisitions.) However, I was able to borrow a sewing machine from my daughter and began using the technique of *coupé-cousu* (cut and sewn) to create simple and trendy bucket hats. Another daughter helped me set up an



Instagram account dedicated to the “business” and, with the girls and my son modeling, *voilà!* I sold my first hat. It was black crushed velvet lined with faux shearling, and I was thrilled. Emboldened, I made an identical one and sent it to the hat-loving daughter of the much-admired rock star Patti Smith. She wore it and sent me a photo!



The sale, actually, wasn't as important and as much of a breakthrough as the visibility of the Instagram account was. I've always had a tendency to retreat, to adopt shyness and to stay in the background. Putting my name and my work out there in the world was a huge and terrifying step. I am lucky to have dear friends and family supporting me, helping me with constructive criticism ("Ugh, Mom – you can't say that in your copy!") and generally providing the wind in my sails.

Back in Paris, finally, I took more classes and began branching out with my collection. Bucket hats remained *très à la mode* and I happily made, and sold, many. My learning reached its zenith this past August, when I participated in an international celebration of millinery, "London Hat Week." I was able to meet and take classes with the finest hat makers in the world and absorbed new techniques and skills like a sponge during those joyful days.

**Biggest challenges**

More uncomfortable visibility is in my immediate future, as I am trying to embrace the launching of my website. It's been a challenge to create and is, perhaps, the ultimate in that unnerving and unsettling quality, visibility. I hope, by the end of 2022, to have HarrisPat.com up and running profitably. It's currently a one-woman show, and I'm embarrassed even to be the author of the copy on the site, let alone the model, the marketer, and the media manager! A recent feather in my cap (sorry!) came in the form of online recognition by one of my fabric suppliers. Trap Fabricks in Brooklyn named me a "Trapper of the Week" and featured two of my hats on their IG account, the one with over five thousand followers. It was exciting

**My company name ...**

The name of my company is somewhat obscure and not comprehensible to many, at first. Always fond of spoonerisms, I used as inspiration a beloved Cole Porter song, "Always True to You in My Fashion."

"Mister Harris, plutocrat,  
Wants to give my cheek a pat.  
If a Harris Pat means a  
Paris hat ..."



Social media kudos for her company.

and wonderful exposure, gaining me many new followers of my own on [Instagram](#).

**What the future holds**

Looking ahead, I would like to expand into the bridal market with veils and headpieces for that big day. I hope to produce a collection of straw fedoras next spring in the colors of the season. I want people to collect my hats, not only because they protect from the sun, but because they make them feel beautiful and empowered. A hat conveys style, confidence, and purpose. I hope the individuals choosing to wear mine take their place in the world with just these traits.

Another *voilà*. I tip my hat to many more!

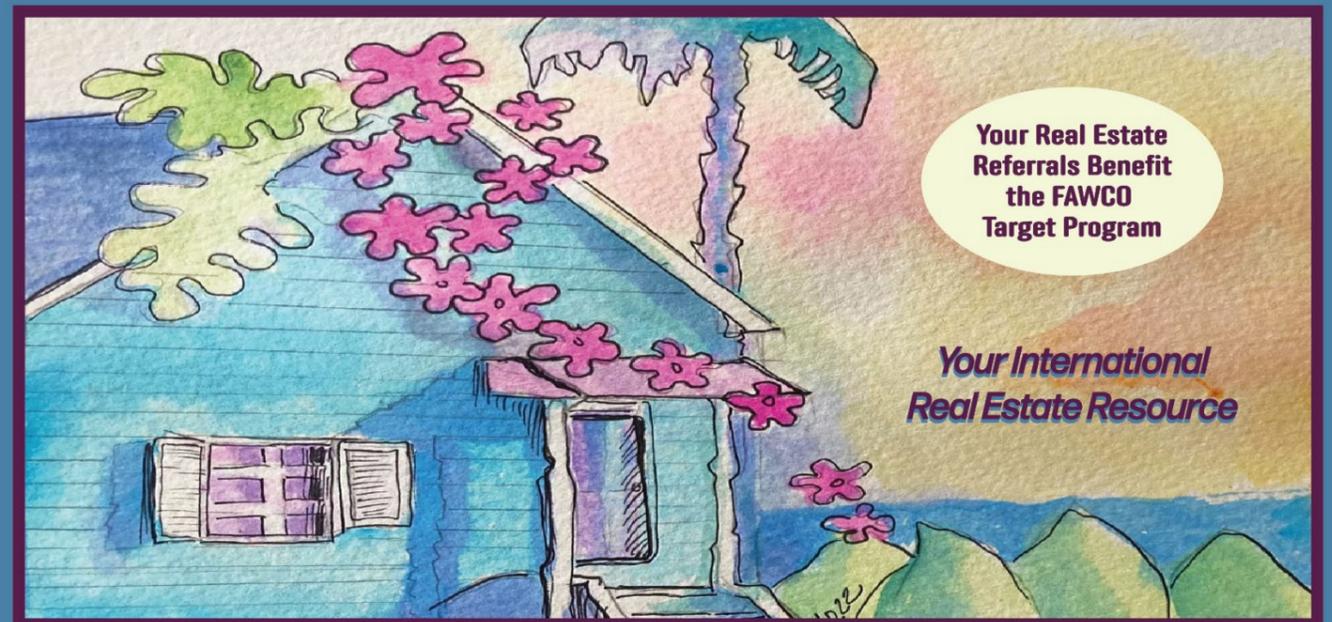


Made in France. (above)  
Deborah's hat making tools: crown blocks, spinners and brimmers! (right)



**BUY SELL INVEST**

Call Janet Darrow 1-562-243-5317



CADRE#0197602

JanetLDarrow@gmail.com



Janet Darrow  
International and Domestic  
Real Estate Transactions

feature



## Announcing the Inspired Reader

We are delighted to announce that the Inspired Reader for our Women & Youth Issue is:



**Dana Cognetta Fritchie**

of AIWC Frankfurt Taunus Rhein-Main, Germany.

Congratulations to her and well done to all the people who joined in the fun. **A \$50 donation has been made to the Target Project in her name.**

If you think you could be the next *Inspiring Women* Inspired Reader, why not make a note of the next date now!

The quiz will be launched on Facebook and via the FAWCO publication News In Brief on **December 5th**, with entries due in by 11pm C.E.T. on **December 21st.**



London  
&Capital

# We understand your world

International Americans: we believe in truly borderless wealth management. One team will manage your global strategy, wherever you go.

London & Capital.

The destination for international Americans.

Arrange an introduction with Jenny today

[jenny.judd@londonandcapital.com](mailto:jenny.judd@londonandcapital.com)



Search [London & Capital US Family Office](#) to learn more.

The value of investments and any income from them can fall as well as rise and neither is guaranteed. Investors may not get back the capital they invested. Past performance is not indicative of future performance. The material is provided for informational purposes only. No news or research item is a personal recommendation to trade. Nothing contained herein constitutes investment, legal, tax or other advice.

Copyright © London and Capital Wealth Advisers Limited. London and Capital Wealth Advisers Limited is authorised and regulated by both by the Financial Conduct Authority of 12 Endeavour Square, London E20 1JN, with firm reference number 120776 and the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission of 100 F Street, NE Washington, DC 20549, with firm reference number 801-63787. Registered in England and Wales, Company Number 02080604.

London and Capital Wealth Management Europe A.V., S.A. registered with the Commercial Registry of Barcelona at Volume 48048, Sheet 215, Page B-570650 and with Tax Identification Number (NIF) A16860488, authorised and supervised by the Comisión Nacional del Mercado de Valores ("CNMV"), and registered at CNMV's register under number 307 ([www.cnmv.es/portal/home.aspx](http://www.cnmv.es/portal/home.aspx)).

# Dancing Across the Continents

*Lesley Klewinghaus, a member of AIWC Heidelberg, dances her way through life, from student and owning her own studio to winning a world title.*



Lesley Klewinghaus, FAWCO member and radiant champion!

**I** grew up in Hillcrest, which is a town outside Durban, South Africa. I had a fantastic childhood, with very supportive parents. My mother was always on the side of the netball field supporting and coaching (my mother had played for the then Transvaal (Gauteng) Provincial Side. She and I danced together doing Modern Dance and did a number of dance shows together. So, my love of dance started at a very early age: Ballet, Modern Dance and Aerobics.

### **After leaving home**

Once I finished school I went to a Technicon and studied for a secretary diploma and started working as a secretary for a number of years, but my love of dancing made me change my career choice. I then started teaching Ballroom and Latin at Arthur Murray's full time and went on to get my Masters Diploma for dancing. I gave up teaching dancing to raise my two boys.

### **Life changes**

Our family moved over to Germany from South Africa in 2017, a staggered event. My youngest son, Nikolai, was invited to play rugby for the German National Team in January of 2017, so he came across. A few months later my husband was offered a position here in Germany, and in another few months my eldest son, Alexander, came across to join his brother and my husband. Everything was just falling into place so I was left in South Africa to sell, pack up and close up my beauty salon.

**Lesley and her partner at the World Championships.**





"Toe-ing the Line," Loving the Limelight, Dramatic Elegance or Flirty Flapper, Lesley expresses herself through world winning dance moves.

I also had to hand over my dance studio (my heart and soul) to students of mine to run. I am still very much involved in my studio in South Africa. I go over on a regular basis to do technique workshops and train the competitive dancers. I also participate in dance shows while I am there and adjudicate at the competitions.

I eventually arrived at the end of 2017 to set up a new home and learn a different way of life. Both my sons play rugby here; Nikolai still plays for the German National Team 15s and is part of the 7s program. I also opened up my lash extension salon again, called Just Lashes. I also teach Ballroom and Latin and Line Dancing every week.

#### **Involvement in your hobby and passion**

My passion is Line Dancing, which I started 16 years ago. A friend and I made a New Year's Eve resolution together saying we would start dancing again, which we both had not done for a long time. A few months later I saw an advert for Line Dancing in our area. So, I went along to a class and got caught, hook, line and sinker.

I then started my own studio, Just DANCE Studio. I have trained numerous dancers who have won World Titles and South African Titles in all levels. Just DANCE Studio not only teaches competitive dancers but also social dancers. The Studio also does Team Dances and demonstrations, for which I do all of the choreography, even while I am miles away.

My hobbies are:

- Painting and drawing. Have done lots of painting onto canvas, abstract genre. Both my parents painted but I only found my talent in my 30s.
- Making quilts and using my fancy embroidery machine. Crocheting and making blankets.
- Anything arty crafty is a hobby for me.

Line Dancing is doing Ballroom and Latin without a partner, so everything just fell into place for me. Line Dancing is done to all types of music, not just country music. I very much enjoy choreographing new dances and doing the choreography for team events and shows for stage productions.

With regard to painting, I love how something seems to just fall into place onto the canvas. With designing quilts and embroidering, it's all about colors.

#### **Training and education**

I am qualified as an Associate Teacher and as an International Adjudicator for World Dance Masters. I have recently done the Adjudicators course for the International Gold Association as well. The love of dance and music is my mentor. For the arty-crafty stuff I attended workshops/ classes and have good friends that inspire me.

#### **Taking your hobby to the next level**

My first step to take my dancing to the next level was opening up my own studio, but here I had the support of loyal students who helped with the power and courage to take the leap.

Dancing is fun and a good way to socialize and keep healthy and fit. Dancing helps people enjoy themselves and leave their worries outside the studio. So, mentally it is good for all. Dancers have to concentrate to remember step patterns and music is a good escape.

#### **Biggest challenges and best experiences**

The biggest challenge I had was training myself for competitions and training my students at the same time. I then decided to retire from competing and concentrate on teaching and training my students.

Best experiences were to dance nearly every year at the World Championships in Blackpool, UK, in the world-renowned Winter Gardens. I won my first World Title in 2011. And just recently I came out of retirement and danced with a friend from South Africa and entered the Partners section of the South African Championship and the World Championship and won both times.

#### **A typical day**

Whenever I have a chance, I have music playing, searching for new music to choreograph a dance to, and learning new dances when they are released. I enjoy teaching and sharing my knowledge with other dancers and coaching them to become better dancers.



**Childhood story that best explains the person you are today**

I grew up in an "out of town" suburb. We (the neighborhood children) played cricket and soccer with the herd boys while their cows roamed freely around the houses. We also went exploring a lot along the cliff sides and cave hunting. The curfew time was when the street lights came on, then it was time to head home. So in essence I grew up carefree and enjoy life as it is.

**The wildest thing I have ever done is ...**

Wildest thing I have done ... where do I start ... Zip Lining over gorges and animals, roller coasters, I am the first one in line to take a ride.

**Back in time to ...**

Back to Victorian times, beautiful dresses, beautifully big ballrooms.

**Dream vacation**

If money was not an object I would go to the Serengeti (Tanzania) and the Masai Mara (Kenya) to see the migration of the animals. I would take my family and close friends with me.

**One thing you would change about yourself**

I would go back to my youth and pursue dancing at a more professional level a lot earlier than I did.



Lesley and her partner dancing their world winning routine for the judges.

World dance masters  
**WORLD CHAMPION**  
2022



A World Championship podium finish!

P.J. Salvage®  
WILD STAR

The Pajama Company

Ellie Badanes, AW Surrey and FAUSA Member.  
Founder, The Pajama Company

# Putting the Pieces Together

*Suzanne MacNeil, FAUSA member, shares her journey from one adult ed mosaic art class to traveling throughout Europe to learn from the mosaic masters. She now teaches and encourages others in the US.*



Suzanne MacNeil, “fascinated” by mosaics.

**I** grew up in Miami and it was a fun and happy childhood. My father was an avid boater and he traded in boats almost as often as he did our cars. We fished and swam and sunbathed each summer. Whatever fish we caught he cleaned at the dock and they’d be dinner that evening. There isn’t anything I’d change about my childhood and I patterned my job as a parent for my two sons after the work my parents did to raise me and my siblings.

My father was a disc jockey in the fifties (with a fan club!) in New York City, Philadelphia and New Orleans, which is where he met my mother. They met on a blind date, were engaged that night and married six weeks later. Their marriage lasted 63 years, until my father passed away in 2018. During his time as a disc jockey, Dad was offered a job in television but he turned it down thinking the new medium would never replace radio! My paternal grandmother was a groundbreaker. She was the head of the wardrobe department at Fox Studios and MGM in the 1920s, designing costumes for Norma Shearer. She encouraged me to pursue my dreams. My maternal grandparents and my parents supported my goals to work in the television news business.

In high school I was my school’s reporter on a Miami radio station. I did my freshman year at Miami Dade Community College, where I majored in communications and was awarded the outstanding student in radio and television. I went on to Florida State University,

Suzanne, smashing glass to create art.





Suzanne with her family. (left)

From tiny tiles a new passion begins. (above right)

Suzanne's first mosaic piece, a Delft frame. (below right)

where I majored in mass communications. My news writing professor was the evening anchor at the new ABC station in Tallahassee and offered an internship to all his students. I was the only one who took him up on the offer. Six months later I was hired as a full-time reporter, working the day shift, and finishing my degree taking night classes at FSU. The biggest story I covered was the Ted Bundy murders/attacks on women at the university. I knew that it was the biggest story I would ever cover, and I still think about how he changed my college and professional lives.



Focused on the job. Reporter Suzanne, in a TV publicity clip.

### After leaving home

I then went to West Palm Beach Florida as a reporter and host at the ABC station. Next, I was hired at a CBS station in Illinois to host *PM Magazine*, a nationally syndicated show with local hosts. It was there that I met my first husband (I interviewed him!) and later moved to Cincinnati, where he was hired as an assistant basketball coach at the University of Cincinnati, and where our two sons were born. We eventually moved to Orange Park, Florida, where I produced and wrote a documentary that aired nationally on PBS and six seasons of a cooking show on HGTV. We then moved to Nashville, where I produced numerous segments for CBS specials, CMT programs, and commercials. In Nashville we were divorced. I worked for Nissan Americas in internal communications and then oversaw internal and external communications for Goodwill Industries of Middle Tennessee, the best job ever!

I met my second husband, Tim, in Nashville. He was kind of the man next door, as he was across the cul-de-sac from my house. We started dating in

October 2007. I remarried in November 2012 and one month later Tim told me he was offered a job in Europe and did I want to move across the pond. I jumped at the offer and we were expats in the Netherlands for seven years. Our first six months we lived in Amsterdam and then moved to The Hague. Never did I think I would live outside the US, let alone be able to travel and experience the multicultural opportunities that were laid at my feet. Once in The Hague I discovered the AWC The Hague and joined, meeting women who understood the trials, tribulations, and experiences of being planted in a new country. I took on numerous roles within the club and became president.

### Involvement in your hobby and passion

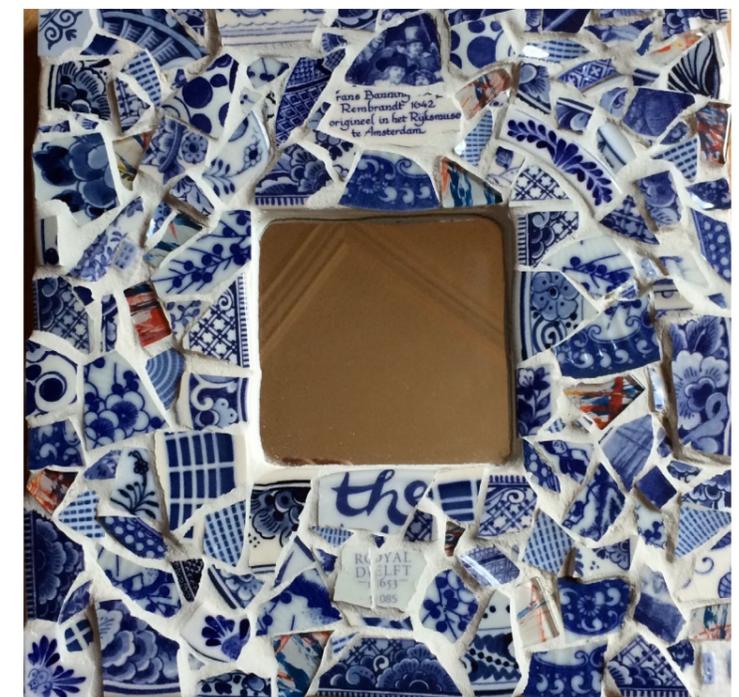
Six months after moving to The Hague I had just one friend and hadn't become too involved with the AWC. I found an adult ed beginner mosaic three-hour class offered at the American School and asked my friend if she wanted to give it a try. Neither of us considered ourselves artists or had ever made a mosaic. We used broken pieces of Delft Blue pottery and adhered them to a framed mirror. I loved the class and felt as though I found what I didn't know I needed! I wanted more mosaic experience, so we started going weekly to the instructor's studio for about six months. While these workshops allowed me to hone some of my skills, it was mostly trial and error as the woman hosting the group didn't teach, she only provided space and materials.

When I first moved to the Netherlands, I was mesmerized by the brick streets and sidewalk pavers in many of the countries we visited. There is order in them and in the intricate brick and stone patterns, not just in the streets, but also the walls of many buildings. I took a lot of pictures of those patterns, and when I started mosaic classes I realized the correlation between the brick patterns and mosaics and why I had been fascinated with them.

### Training and education

While I enjoyed the weekly sessions, I needed more guidance. I learned of a workshop in Ulbeek, Belgium, hosted by Mireille Swinnen, one of the most beloved artists in the mosaic community. Mireille had invited a maestro and maestra from Venice to oversee a five-day intensive workshop with marble and stone as the

primary materials, and cutting the stone with a hammer and hardie, tools I had never seen before, let alone used. I was, by far, the most inexperienced attendee, so green that I cut my fingers so often those five days that I went through a box of bandages, but I was hooked. I went on to take 10 workshops throughout





Suzanne and Dino Maccini, an incredibly talented artist. (left)

Orsoni's showroom, where 3,500 colors of glass (*smalti*) are made for artists worldwide. (right)

Classroom in the world-renowned Scuola Mosaicisti del Friuli in Spilimbergo, Italy. (below)



Europe during my time as an expat. I traveled to Cologne to work with two maestras, took part in a workshop in the Netherlands, and went to a three-day micromosaic class with Mireille in Listowel, Ireland. I returned to Ulbeek several times, once to work with Dino Maccini and his interpreter, Anabella Wewer, two incredibly talented artists. But, the most amazing mosaic journey was with Mireille through Northern Italy. She took our group of six artists (all American) to see mosaics created between the fourth and 11th centuries in the cities of Aquileia and Udine. We toured the world-renowned Scuola Mosaicisti del Friuli in Spilimbergo, where students undergo an intensive three-year curriculum. To see the students at work on their amazing pieces of art and to soak up the incredible talent was truly life-changing. From the town of Spilimbergo our group traveled to Venice and spent four days at Orsoni Venezia, where the last mosaic glass furnace allowed to operate in Venice is housed, and where we were dazzled by the 3,500 colors of glass (*smalti*) made for artists worldwide. I now only use *smalti* in my mosaics, almost all of it from Orsoni. When we repatriated to Nashville my primary concern for our cargo shipment was ensuring all my many boxes of *smalti* and my hardie would arrive unscathed, which they did.

### **Taking your hobby to the next level**

We knew we would return to Nashville in late 2019. In October of that year Tim had a business meeting in the US and stopped in Nashville hoping to find a house for us. He did. A beautiful spot on two acres with a stand-alone building on the property. I claimed it for my mosaic studio. The building was just a shell when we moved back, with a plywood floor and exposed studs. Tim finished the interior, added shingles on the roof, which, until that point, was a sod/grass roof, and we added a countertop over a cabinet we found at a resale store. The shelves in the studio are a bit of a homage to my life in Europe; they're from IKEA and where all my materials are easy to see and labeled. The best part ... A/C and heating so I can work in whatever weather Nashville throws at us. It's my sanctuary, where I can blast my music and create. It's the fulfillment of my vision. It's called Glassy Eyed Mosaics. And that first mosaic I made using a hammer and hardie has never been completed, but I decided it represents the start of my journey and it's the logo for Glassy Eyed Mosaics.

Having attended multiple workshops where artists freely shared tips and techniques, and having started my mosaic journey at weekly

workshops where I had access to materials and a space to work but no one to guide me, I decided Glassy Eyed Mosaics would be the best of both worlds. It's my sanctuary. It's a place for people to learn a new skill, whether they're already an artist or someone who wants to explore. I host workshops for adults and children and I'm there to answer questions, offer suggestions, chat, and enjoy knowing that my guests feel the same satisfaction that I do creating a piece of art. I see me when I was first starting and it brings me incredible satisfaction.

### **Biggest challenges**

I'm a mosaics late bloomer. I never took art classes and knew nothing about basics like the color wheel, the best way to hold the hammer for the best cuts, or shading, or any number of time-worn techniques. Now, after practice, I'm doing more work well. However, this is not an easy process for me. Being at a loss while in a workshop with instructors was the best way for me to learn, and those workshops were plentiful in Europe. I enjoyed the camaraderie and learning from my fellow mosaicists. But working alone in my studio is frustrating at times. When I'm stuck, I walk away for a few days so I can see the problems with fresh eyes. I've also been known to take photos of my

project and send to a mosaicist with whom I've worked, and ask for opinions and suggestions. As always, my mosaic friends are kind and generous, and help me see my way through the fog.

***Favorite way to inspire others***

Glassy Eyed Mosaics is up and running and, while I encourage the locals to try mosaics, I decided to get my FAWCO and FAUSA friends to give it a try, too. I donated a three-day, immersive workshop in Nashville for the silent auction at the IM in Luxembourg. There was a bidding war between Kathy deBest vs. Carol-Lyn McKelvey. When time ran out, Kathy won with a bid of \$1,500. I decided that it's best to share and Carol-Lyn agreed to match Kathy's bid and also paid \$1,500. I donated another three-day workshop for the FAUSA Getaway in Santa Fe in October.

***What the future holds***

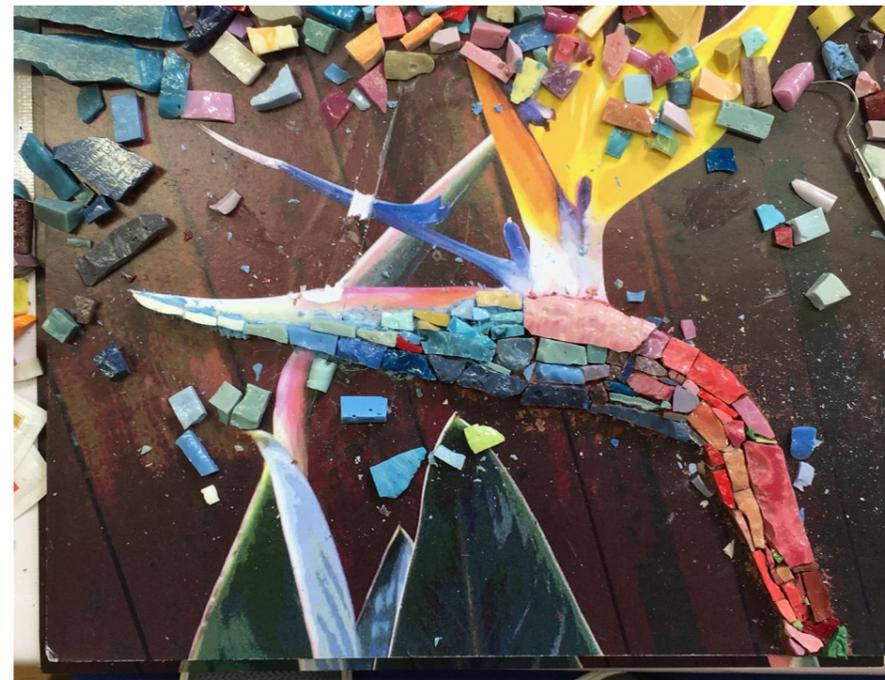
There are very few mosaicists in Middle Tennessee, at least that I know of. However, as I was heading to a gate at the Nashville airport earlier this year there was a mosaic installation on display. The artist works primarily with stained glass. Her style is quite different than mine, but just beautiful. I got in contact with her and we're going to join forces and offer workshops at my studio as she doesn't have the space to host students. And, I look forward to working together, learning more about her style and she is looking forward to working with smalti, a material she rarely uses.

***Childhood story that best explains the person you are today***

My parents always encouraged me. They told me that I should pursue my passions and they supported me when I set out on my career in television news. Of course, I called them and asked their opinion since I'd be working full-time and finishing my degree part-time. My dad told me to take the job, that if I turned down the opportunity I'd likely regret that decision. That job launched my career and my parents were proud of everything I accomplished, relishing my success and helping me pick myself up when things didn't go well. I still thank my mom for her support all those years ago!

***The wildest thing I have ever done is....***

The wildest thing I *didn't* do was to take advantage of the opportunity to fly with the US Navy Blue Angels. I was the host of the show *PM Magazine* and the Blue Angels, as part of their public relations/recruiting efforts, were in the area for an airshow. The team offers three local celebrities in the many markets they visit the chance to fly and experience a ride with the Blue Angels. I was offered one of those slots. Nope! No way was I going to subject myself to g-force. I wasn't interested in flying upside down, being in a plane that climbs nearly straight up, that performs barrel rolls and all sorts of



other maneuvers that would have me begging, pleading, and beseeching the pilot to land on the nearest patch of grass. My husband still can't believe I turned down the opportunity. It's a decision I don't regret!

***Back in time to ...***

My paternal grandfather left my grandmother and my father in 1930 when my dad was just five years old. My father only saw him twice after that, the last time was when he was at the train station heading out for basic training during World War II. My dad barely remembered his father and didn't have any information about his grandparents, aunts, uncles, or cousins. After my dad died in 2018 I started searching for his relatives using the 23andMe DNA test kit. I got my answers a few years ago. I've met cousins and they helped me create a family tree. I wish I could go back in time, before my dad died (who I miss terribly), to let him know I found his family. I would tell him that his father, Bernard (aka Barney) was the eighth of Marks (aka Max) and Amelia Abrahams' nine children, one of just two born in the US The other siblings were born in Russia and then London before the family immigrated to America to escape growing anti-Semitism in Europe. The remaining mystery is left to be solved. Did Barney remarry and did he have other children? Did my dad have step-siblings? I hope one day to solve the mystery.

Suzanne in her studio, Glassy Eyed Mosaics. (far left)

Beautiful Bird of Paradise smalti mosaic artwork from Suzanne. (top left)

A recent creation with the look of a remnant from another time. (center left)

Where the magic happens; Suzanne's workspace. (below left)

# 24 Hours in ... Dublin, Ireland

*Who best to tell us about the best places to visit in a new city than those who live there? AWCD board members take us on a whistle stop tour of Dublin.*

AWCD was founded in 1972. It was initially designed to focus on supporting ex-pats with ties to the American embassy. We have approximately 180 members. About 15% consider themselves to be long term settled here with Irish spouses etc. We offer a mix of cultural, social and philanthropic activities. The purpose of the club is to foster and encourage American-Irish relations and cross-cultural understanding among American women and their families living in Ireland through our educational and philanthropic activities.



Back row L-R: Monica Welch - President AWCD, Margie O'Rourke - AWCD Deputy, Second Row - Noreen Griffin - Past President, Lori Garife - Treasurer. Front Right - Nurdan Colleran - FAWCO Representative.



## Why visit Dublin

As of 2018, Dublin was listed by the Globalization and World Cities Research Network as a "global city," with a ranking of "Alpha minus," which places it among the top thirty cities in the world. It's a medieval city with a modern atmosphere. Dublin is steeped in history, culture, art, and entertainment. The city center has a vast amount of great shopping and wonderful restaurants with a variety of local and ethnic cuisine.

St. Patrick's Cathedral's stunning architecture.

# The Main Attractions:

## Dublin Castle

Erected in the early 13th century on the site of a Viking settlement, Dublin Castle served for centuries as the headquarters of English and later British administration in Ireland. Following Ireland's independence in 1922, the Castle was handed over to the new Irish government. It is now a major government complex and a key tourist attraction.



## Grafton Street at Christmas



## Glasnevin Cemetery Museum

Located in Finglas, the cemetery has the graves of many notable figures such as Daniel O'Connell, Charles Stewart Parnell, Michael Collins, Constance Markievicz, Brendan Behan and Luke Kelly of the Dubliners plus many more. A rarely used back gate links the graveyard to The Gravediggers pub – so named because it was frequented by grave diggers for some 200 years. A scene from the film *Michael Collins* was filmed in The Gravediggers pub.

## Dublin Horse Show in August



## EPIC The Irish Immigration Museum

At EPIC you'll discover the far-reaching influence of Irish history, and the impact the 10 million Irish men and women who left Ireland have had on the world.



A great time can be had any time of year in Ireland but there is an awful lot of extra fun to be had at Christmas, during the Dublin horse show in August or when there is a hurling match at Croke Park in summer or a rugby or Irish football match at Aviva stadium in autumn. Golf is played year round and one of Ireland's classic links golf courses can be found in nearby Portmarnock.

Dublin benefits from a maritime climate with temperatures typically falling between 40-70° F (4-20° C). Many Americans appreciate the lack of weather stress from heavy snow, hurricanes and high heat. Although Ireland gets a fair amount of rain to keep everything so green, Dublin only gets about half of the rainfall that is experienced in the west of the country.



### Trinity College

Established 429 years ago, Trinity is one of the leading universities in the world. Visitors can stroll the grounds of Trinity. Trinity houses the famous Book of Kells and visitors can also visit the Library of Trinity College, which contains approximately seven million printed volumes and manuscripts. The library has been used in many popular film scenes.

### Kilmainham Gaol

Now a museum. Many Irish revolutionaries, including the leaders of the 1916 Easter Rising, were imprisoned and executed within the prison. It now houses a museum on the history of Irish Nationalism.



The Ha'Penny Bridge over the River Liffey



Herbert Park



The Grand Canal

## City Snaps

## Best of the Rest

### 14 Henrietta St.

Here you will visit a social history museum of Dublin life, from one building's Georgian beginnings to its tenement times. The museum connects the history of urban life over 300 years to the stories of the people who called this place home.

### The Irish Writers Museum

The writers featured in the museum are those who have made an important contribution to Irish and international literature or, on a local level, to the literature of Dublin.

### The National Museum

The museum collects and exhibits material of Irish interest and its stated aim is to increase and diffuse the knowledge of Irish civilization, the natural history of Ireland and the relations of Ireland in these respects with other countries.

### Christ Church Cathedral

Renowned for its beauty, architecture and exquisite floor tiles, it is home to the famous 12th-century crypt. It was founded in 1030 by Sitric, King of the Dublin Norsemen, and was incorporated into the Irish Church in 1152 and eventually led by the famous Archbishop and patron saint of Dublin, Laurence O'Toole.

### Guinness Storehouse

See and learn how the famous Guinness pint is brewed. Also imbibe a free pint in the Gravity Bar while enjoying a breathtaking view of Dublin city at the very top of the Storehouse.

### St. Michen's Church

A Church of Ireland church located on Church St. The church is known for its vaults, which contain a number of "mummified" remains.

# F

For Irish food and entertainment:



**Peploe's** – located on St. Stephen's Green – is a classic French bistro offering specially selected Irish produce and directly imported European wines.

**No. 27 Shelbourne Bar** – located in the Shelbourne Hotel, here you can enjoy elevated bar food classics and fresh Irish seafood served with casual elegance.

**Cobblestones Pub** (Smithfield) – provides for a pleasant evening of traditional music with a nice atmosphere.

**Whelan's** – A venue for live music and clubs or relaxing in the Parlour, decorated in 1950s sitting room style. [whelanslive.com](http://whelanslive.com)

**Abbey Theatre** – Also known as the National Theatre of Ireland, whose mission it is to imaginatively engage with all of Irish society through the production of ambitious, courageous and new theatre in all its forms. [abbeytheatre.ie](http://abbeytheatre.ie)

**The Brazen Head** – Dating back to 1198, the Brazen Head is the oldest pub in Ireland. Full of history. If you are looking for a great pint, great food and great music, the Brazen Head should be your first port of call.

**The National Concert Hall** – the home of music in Ireland. The NCH provides lunchtime as well as night time concerts all year long. For up-to-date information, see [nch.ie](http://nch.ie)

### Recommended Restaurants:

**Chapter One** – Is one of Dublin's leading restaurants and has won numerous awards for both food and service. The food is a delicate blend of old-style with innovative twists. The emphasis is on organic and seasonal ingredients to produce the best possible dining experience for the customer.

**Roly's Bistro** – Roly's has a reasonably priced menu and wine list together with a casual light-hearted atmosphere, making it an instant hit with everybody. Fresh heated bread is baked daily in the bakery.

**Quay's Irish Restaurant** – Quay's, located in Temple Bar Square, specializes in traditional Irish dishes like Irish Stew, famous Wicklow lamb shank, Dublin Coddle, Cottage Pie and Slow Cooked Beef and Guinness Stew.

### A nice place to relax, have a beverage and take in the atmosphere

**St. Stephen's Green Park** – At the top of Grafton St., the park provides an oasis of green calm in the middle of a bustling city. St. Stephen's Green Park hosts a large number of important sculptural monuments to Irish history. Many species of birds and plants also call the park their home. Public facilities at St. Stephen's Green Park include a playground and a garden for the visually impaired.



Breakfast might involve a cuppa and a scone or porridge, but most often a full Irish breakfast with the works is a feast. Before lunch go for a walk around St. Stephen's Green, check out nearby Iveagh Gardens and/or Merrion Square Park near Leinster House. Consider a historical walking tour like the 1916 Rebellion Tour that will take you to the historic GPO north of the Liffey.



Grab lunch at an authentic Irish Pub like Doheny & Nesbitt. After lunch check out the shops on the pedestrian Grafton Street or head to Nassau street shops including the Kilkenny Shop. Be sure to swing by the nearby Aran Sweater Market. Consider a stop by St. Patrick's Cathedral as well for some stunning architecture.

Some great restaurants can be found around the embassy belt in Ballsbridge if you are staying at hotels out that way. Roly's Bistro is a classic near the US Embassy and the beautiful Herbert Park, and the Chop House is nice as well. There are nice walks around the canal nearby. There is also a Farmer's Market at Herbert Park with several food trucks as well on Sundays from 11:00 a.m – 4:00 p.m.

If you want a lot of spur-of-the-moment pub options, head to Temple Bar down near the Liffey and keep an ear out for trad music at Olive St. John Gogarty's or other nearby venues. [www.gogartys.ie](http://www.gogartys.ie)

# Shopping Recommendations:

## Kilkenny Shop

Kilkenny Shop has been at the forefront of promoting the finest Irish craft and design for over 50 years and is home to Ireland's largest collection of Irish designers. R&C McCormack, Grafton St. - Authentic Celtic jewellers in Dublin since 1963.



## Duke St. Gallery

Visit Duke's for Irish artwork and prints.

## Sheridan's Cheesemongers

Look for cheese, wine, crackers and jams.



## Fallon & Byrne

Dublin's destination for delicious groceries, wines and just about everything that is scrumptious.

## Butler's Chocolates

Founded in 1932, Butler's is Ireland's premier family-owned firm dedicated to the craft of exceptional chocolate-making. Butler's are devoted chocolatiers who create unforgettable experiences for you to discover and savour. Their shops are found in several city-center locations.



## Transportation in Dublin City:

Dublin is easy to get around either by taxi or Dublin Bus. Also available is the Dart System of trams. There is also a bus from Dublin Airport into the city center on a regular basis.

## How accessible is Dublin City?

Dublin has been named the most accessible city in Europe for tourists using wheelchairs in a study conducted by Alpharooms Travel Blog. In a comparative list that includes the continent's most visited and well-known cities, the capital of Ireland came out on top. The majority of the city is accessible, with 95% of the curbs in the city cut. The lowered curbs make exploring and getting around Dublin much easier. The website [handiscover.com](http://handiscover.com) gives good advice and suggestions on where to visit, eat and stay in Dublin.



# GUIDING YOUNG ADULTS

INTO COLLEGE GRAD SCHOOL AND CAREER!



LIFE IS SHORT. DREAM BIG!



THE SHORT LIST  
COLLEGE & CAREER COUNSELING

[www.TheShortList.org](http://www.TheShortList.org) • (413) 528-LIST (5478)

© 2022 THE SHORT LIST. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

# Books Open Worlds

*Karen Boeker, a member of AWC Denmark, reveals how her love of books framed her life of advocacy for reading as a teacher and organizer of an award-winning German cultural project.*



Karen Boeker enjoying the UK.

I grew up in the north of Germany in the city of Lubeck, which is 60km northeast of Hamburg and is famous for many authors – among them the 1929 Nobel Prize laureate for literature, Thomas Mann.

Between the ages of four and five, I had to spend almost a year in a hospital. My dad was a great storyteller, and it was our evening ritual throughout my childhood that he would read fairy tales to me and talk about the characters in those stories. While there I was lucky enough to be surrounded by night nurses who would read books to me because in those days children could only be visited an hour per day.

Although my mum couldn't find joy in reading books herself, she definitely ensured I always had access to books. When she couldn't finance my "hunger" for books anymore, she introduced me to the public library in our area, with the result that I devoured even more books and begged her to buy the ones I loved the most anyhow. And she did!

Basically all my life I watched my parents being very unhappy with each other, which resulted first in my dad leaving and then in their divorce when I was nine. After the divorce, my dad became a "weekend dad," we became even closer by sharing stories, reading, and playing together. He was the one I turned to first to when I needed to match the stories I read with the real world. One of his most remembered gifts until today was a gift certificate for my birthday that promised visiting a bookstore once a month for one year where I

Reading to a Singapore statue.





could pick one book he would buy me. Needless to say that most of the time, I got two. When I was a young teenager, I had a dear friend (she has been my friend for about 40 years now) with whom I met regularly and we would sit somewhere and read together. Around the same time, I remember my art teacher who wanted us to create a draft for a linocut. After sitting in class with a completely blank mind (this had never happened before or since), I asked him for help, and he sat down with me and asked about my hobbies. We then developed together the idea of creating a walkway between bookshelves in a library. This was the first time I had felt a sense and capability in art class.

#### **After leaving home**

I had already left home before my last year in high school and then went to university to become a high school teacher. At university, it didn't take long to meet my now husband Michael. While we were falling in love with each other he even read some of my favorite books at the time – wonderful! To this day, he never fails to surprise me with great books. Instead of buying me jewelry, he chooses a book I might

enjoy; a much greater gift ... Michael started his career with Unilever, which meant we would move every few years for the next assignment. Still to this day, at every visit of a moving company coming to estimate the scope of our belongings, I start with apologizing for the many books the team will need to move.

#### **Life changes**

We started our ex-pat journey in Switzerland in 2007. In 2011 we came back to Germany for two and a half years, and then ex-pat life really took off. Going to Mumbai was a life-changing decision because it not only opened a new world for us but also introduced me to FAWCO, and it was there that I caught FAWCO fever in 2017. Soon we moved to Sweden, and I joined the AWC Denmark, influenced by the warm welcome of the Denmark ladies at the Biennial FAWCO Conference in Mumbai. During our time in Sweden, I joined the FAWCO education team and the Inspiring Women team. In addition, I am also immensely grateful that since 2017 I have been able to attend FAWCO conferences and the CSW at the UN in 2018 and 2019 until this was halted by the pandemic. Since July 2019, we have been living now in Singapore.

#### **Involvement in your hobby and passion**

I always, ALWAYS loved to read, but I was over thirty when a neighbor's remark sparked the thought that excessive reading can also be a kind of escape. I thought about it and realized that reading indeed was a kind of journey to a safe and happy place, and I could choose where to go and who to meet and what stories to dive into that allowed me to belong. Reading allowed me to understand different personalities and situations; with books as a foundation, real life is easier to understand, and connections are easier to make. I genuinely believe that it also helps people to listen more carefully – a reader is trained to read between the lines, which is a great skill to have ...

#### **Training and education**

I am a high school teacher of German language & literature, and chemistry. So books, teaching, creating projects, encouragement, and reading are/were part of my life for a long time ...

#### **Taking your hobby to the next level**

One day at school, the opportunity came up to start a project to bring the FUN of reading (no papers/tests, no grades ... ) back to school. I simply wanted to make the joy of books and reading visible at school. The thirteen students who signed up for this were all readers; no one needed to be convinced! But wow, were they excited to share their passion for reading, so one project after another became real!

We started to read and talk about books in unusual places and took photos, which resulted in an exhibition and "Books open Worlds" was born. We displayed books prominently according to celebratory dates (guess how it looked for Valentine's Day!). Reading breaks, late-night meetings

at the local bookstore, we slept at school, and invited the mayor (a former teacher), who was brave enough to show up. Authors and politicians read from their (favorite) books ... We worked with a big department store, where we created a one-hour reading program in one of the shop windows and people indeed stopped and stayed for the whole time because the teenagers read so enthusiastically and well. We read on trains and had a live performance in a museum.

An absolute highlight was the literature-dinner, a cooperation with the cooking class. A five-course dinner menu and a seven-course reading menu. These were alternately presented and thoroughly enjoyed by the creators as well as the audience.



Karen and her blended family. (left)  
Karen reading at age 10 and now. (right)



Starting with this small amount, the library now has 3000 books.

wanted internship (in a book store, of course) after searching relatively unsuccessfully for quite some time. Participating in the various book/reading activities helped them to find their place and opened worlds for them they had not seen before. Our motto, "Books open Worlds," was taken to a new level this way.

#### **Biggest challenges**

The biggest challenge in every project is to keep it going. Someone needs

to take action and put his/her strength and passion behind it. The rest will then follow in my experience. But without a passionate initiator, the energy will fade, and the project will end.

#### **Best experiences and successes**

By talking passionately about books, the conversation gets started, and then it's just easy to find a project to be involved with. For example I worked with a group of German learners at the Goethe Institute in Mumbai. We had some lovely workshops about short poems where they could use their language skills and then went on to the (German) library to work with book titles as verses for poems. There is no easier way to connect with people than over books. A good start is a book club: First, you get to read excellent books; second, you get to know people by discussing books and sharing each other's life stories. Connections made this way are the foundation for friendships that have the potential to last a lifetime.

I will continue to share my passion for reading and be on the lookout to start more projects within my community. Books (real books!) have been declared dead many times over the last few decades, but I don't believe this will happen any time soon. Too many (and mostly women) know about the power of reading in general and reading books. If we look back, women shared their stories, their secrets about joy, grief, and everything in between through story-telling

All these activities (and there have been more) matched the requirements for a cultural youth competition which we hesitantly applied for. It was a proud moment when our project was announced the 2006 winner from the amongst 400 applicants of the national culture & art competition "Kinder zum Olymp" der Kulturstiftung der Länder (Foundation of the federal states of Germany) in the "Literature" section (including a special award given by Deutsche Bank). The award was handed over in the Philharmonic of Berlin in the presence of the president of the Federal Republic of Germany and certainly was a once-in-a-lifetime-moment for everyone involved in the projects.

#### **Contributing to a better world**

Reading is a quiet activity, usually enjoyed alone and out of sight of others. Readers know about the joy of reading books, but others don't. And if not connected, readers and book lovers wouldn't know about their shared passion ... I am amazed how those who benefitted the most from "making reading visible" considered themselves a little more introverted. And at those who didn't connect through more popular activities, not knowing that the person right in front of them enjoys reading as much as they do. I remember boys in the project who connected through activities and the stories they read. They simply found a place among others, sometimes for the first time in their teenage years. One of them even got a most needed and

within their community. By listening carefully to each other, I genuinely believe this is one way to make the world a better place. If this profile about me encourages only one club, one group of women to start the journey of making reading books more visible – maybe by including a local and independent book store, a library nearby, or by creating a fun activity around books – the result will be beneficial and enjoyable for everyone involved; this is (almost) guaranteed.

#### **The wildest thing I have ever done is ...**

... deciding within three hours (together with my husband) to move from a tiny village in Germany (population 260) to Mumbai, India, although having never even traveled to Asia before.

#### **Dream vacation**

Walking a coastal trail with my husband in northern Europe, the UK, or Canada "in style" means we wouldn't need to carry our backpacks and would stay in lovely, small "country hotels."

The mayor of Kleve, participating in a school reading night. (above)

Barbara Hendricks, German Minister for the Environment, Nature Conservation, and Nuclear Safety. (below)

#### **One thing would you change about yourself**

I could speak several languages fluently: In addition to German and English, I would be fluent in Swedish, French, Swahili, Hindi, Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic, Italian, and Mandarin. Oh, and sign language, too. Magic!



# From the Ruins, Recognition of a Heritage Arises

*Bénédicte Bodard, a member of BWN, Barcelona, began a mission to save historic tiles discarded due to building renovations. She has turned them into coveted decorative pieces and more.*



Bénédicte Bodard in front of the Barcelona skyline.

**I** was born in Rouen, Normandy, France of French parents. I grew up with four sisters and two brothers. My parents were young during the Second World War but had vivid memories; living in Normandy we often discussed it. We would talk about what my parents lacked, their house burning, the fact that my mother's parents had nothing antique or old in their home because it all disappeared during the war. I was fortunate to have amazingly good-natured and hard-working grandparents and always got along with my siblings, but from a very young age somehow I had a feeling of not belonging. I just wanted to move away and be able to think for myself and not always worry about what one might think of me.

### **After leaving home**

I eventually moved to Paris, where I lived for three years and quickly felt like it was not enough. Just like that, one day I decided to move to Los Angeles with my big suitcase (no wheels then), and \$75.00 in my pocket. I was 22 years old. To this day I think this is the most daring thing I ever did. I was so scared. I had a nice flat and job in Paris but just could not breathe.

### **Life changes**

In LA I did all kinds of odd jobs and, because it was the US, after a few months I was able to buy a car and get a steady job. Eventually I

Bénédicte in the Mesa Bonita studio with a client.





Bénédicte Bodard and her family. (left)

A sampling of the tiles that Bénédicte has salvaged through the years. (right)

Bénédicte painstakingly matching a tile design for a recent project. (far right)

decided (a bit like I tend to decide things in general) to become a wardrobe stylist in the commercial industry. I had no idea of what it was about but learned from a great stylist. And again, LA being LA, almost overnight I was dressing stars and famous models, and working with famous or sometimes infamous directors, until I met my husband, on the set. He was a commercial director, a great comedy director with an excellent reputation; we laughed a lot and eventually got married. I had a daughter, Zoé, and kept working and traveling ...

At some point my husband's work was bringing him more and more to Europe. We started having second thoughts about living in LA, its consumerism, the gun culture, so we packed up and moved to Barcelona where he had work. We fell in love with the city for its architecture, its people and its ... food!

### **Involvement in your hobby & passion**

In Barcelona we lived in a part of town called the Eixample. Most of you who have visited the city have walked on Paseig de Gracia and probably visited some Gaudi buildings on that glamorous avenue. We lived a block away in a really nice apartment and felt like we lived in heaven. It was 2001 and real estate was going through a boom. Apartments were undergoing a major facelift. Unfortunately the remodeling often consisted of removing any

architectural details that most of us value so much: molded ceiling, hydraulic tiles etc. ... On a daily basis I was finding containers filled with these gorgeous tiles; I could not understand how on earth this was allowed and seemed to bother only me. I got into the habit of picking up a tile here and there. Then eventually one day, after an amazing encounter, I decided that I would start collecting more tiles each time and would start making four tile tables. If you put four tiles together they form a circle, a flower, a star etc. If I could not stop people from throwing Barcelona's heritage in dumpsters maybe I could be part of the solution, I could give the rescued tiles a second life and could make them functional again. Small detail though, I had never worked with hydraulic tiles, I had no idea what they were made of nor even less how to restore them, nor how to remove the five cm (or more) from underneath without breaking them? How to remove linoleum, parquet and other floors from the top of the tiles? I knew nothing of their history, their designers. I knew nothing about laying tiles, grouting the tables. Back then in 2006, no information whatsoever was available on the internet. Therefore, I made so many mistakes. Eventually, though, I learned from them. After the four-tile square table came the consoles, narrow and elegant, perfect for Barcelona's long corridors. Frames and trivets shortly followed (easier for travel).

Through the years I kept collecting more tiles, breaking my back but loving it and keeping motivation because I knew I was the only one concerned about the survival of these beautiful historical tiles. My clients became more like fans, always thankful.

### **Taking your hobby to the next level**

Over the years I was not only picking and cleaning tiles and hosting my clients, but also investing lots of time in the history and design of the tiles.

One day, just like that, I was contacted by a lady who was curating an exhibit in Gaudi's stunning Casa Mila. The exhibit, "Decorative Arts in the Time of Modernism," was complete and ready to be admired but the floors were still missing. The curator had contacted all of Spain's museums and collectors but no one could come up with the floors needed to illustrate the glory of the arrival of Modernism: Japonism. An amazing detail from my studio was picked to be displayed. I had never ever imagined that some tiles found in a dumpster years before could ever be exhibited in such a masterpiece of architecture. After the exhibit I realized that what I had been told all these years was a reality: I was the only person

in the world who not only had the tiles but also knew the history. After understanding my clients' needs, I decided that so many treasures I had collected through the years had to be known and displayed. From that day, when people started looking at the tiles as being a real part of Barcelona's heritage, I would tell my clients the stories behind the design they were attracted to, the pigments, the complexity of the patterns and their style, hierarchy etc. ... Over time people started purchasing loose tiles to inlay in another floor (cement, hardwood), which can give so much warmth and character to any given construction. They might add, for example, a few tiles as a backsplash, in front of a fireplace, or as a divider between two rooms.

### **Biggest challenges**

Barcelona tourists or expats are a very great source of new clientele but the recent events (COVID-19 and the Ukraine war) have had an important slowing effect on sales this year. This extra time on my hands is giving me the opportunity to build a new website, as my current one is very obsolete and not very representative of what my company, Mesa Bonita, has become.





Repurposing tile into framed art. (left)

An exquisitely crafted table made by Bénédicte. (right)

From the US I always got back at Christmas time to Normandy to visit my family. Eventually my father retired and I guess got slightly bored, because he would visit auction houses a few times a week and would never come home empty-handed. My mother was pretty appalled (sorry Papa!) at what he often brought home (broken chairs, torn linen sheets, extremely stained mahogany boxes of all types and shapes). She felt really sorry and in most cases saddened but did not have the heart to argue with him. She started restoring just about everything he brought back and gave all these forgotten pieces a new and gorgeous life. I was extremely impressed by the "after," especially since I had seen the "before."



### A typical day

Now that my daughter no longer lives at home, I have more time to devote to my work. I usually do the physical work in the morning. The work is dirty, dusty and fairly tiring. A couple of times a week I spend time on social media trying to remind people that Mesa Bonita is still alive by writing on the history of the tiles or showing people nice/interesting designs that I feel are worth seeing. I also spend a fair amount of time answering inquiries, bidding and having people over who come to visit Mesa Bonita studio, which happens to be downstairs from where I live.

For the past six years I have been able to hire someone who helps me with the "nasty" work, which allows me to make new contacts and dedicate more time to investigation. I also take lots of pictures with cleaned-up tiles for people to have a better idea of what a given style or design would look like in their home.

### The wildest thing I have ever done is ...

The wildest thing I ever did was deciding to move to the US at 22 with not much to offer.

### Dream vacation

I have no regrets and would not go anywhere; I am content with my life, my home, my friends and family. I am lucky and would not trade my life for anyone else's. I have the best daughter (I hope you are reading this, Zoé!). Everyone is healthy, no complaint. Last year I went with my daughter to Club Med for a couple of weeks to Portugal. Having time to read, travel and discover new cultures would be nice but the last few years have been taxing on many levels (health issues, the war in Ukraine, the recession, human rights, mostly women being threatened in many parts of the world etc.).

Each day is a new day to hope and wish for the best, for a change in people's approach in regard to the planet, their relationship with money, power and consumerism.

I feel Mesa Bonita sums up my values and I am very thankful to the people who have allowed me to keep working. Mesa Bonita is about owning a piece of Barcelona and becoming an active player in preserving Barcelona's heritage.

**LONDON REALTY INTERNATIONAL**

Your London Realtor

Lonnée Hamilton, Director  
 hello@londonrealtyinternational.com  
 T: +44 2080 880962  
 WhatsApp: +44 7535 604111  
 londonrealtyinternational.com

## THE EXISTENTIAL TRAVELLER

BRIDGING BORDERS SINCE 1984  
 EXPLORE YOUR DREAMS...  
 ENHANCE YOUR MIND...  
 ENRICH YOUR SOUL...

*The Existential Traveller hosts cultural adventure small group tours that explore art, archaeology, history, and music. You'll travel in a camel caravan through the desert, sail over Mediterranean waters, through the jungles of the Mekong or soar to the height of Mt. Everest.*

### Why US?

#### Personal Hosting



- We are personally connected to the places you'll visit.
- We are committed to preserving environmental integrity and to supporting local economies.
- We are dedicated to your enjoyment and pleasure.

#### For More Information:

Contact: Linda Johnson  
[linda@theexistentialtraveller.club](mailto:linda@theexistentialtraveller.club)  
 Phone: +212693842357

**Special Tours available for FAWCO Clubs! Contact Us**

# A Club Inspires: AIWC Genoa



*Ann De Simoni, of AIWC Genoa, introduces her club to us. AIWC Genoa is one of eight clubs in FAWCO's Region 8.*

**I**n 1956 a group of American and English ladies whose husbands were connected to the shipping and oil business as well as diplomatic corps in Genoa used to meet for coffee and tea and chat. They decided to collect toys and clothes at Christmas that year for the orphans at the Santa Rita Home and to raise money to buy a tree and provide food for a proper Christmas dinner with all the trimmings.

Then in 1957 they thought to become a proper club, drawing up a constitution, and here we are today 65 years later.

#### **How many members do you have and what is their nationality?**

We have an average of 60 – 70 members. Many of us are married to Italian nationals and our lives will continue in Genoa. A small number of members are here with work assignments for foreign companies, and then there are many bilingual Italian/European women that either are English teachers or have worked or lived in America and continue to enjoy the American culture and traditions the club offers.

#### **How does the club run?**

We have a biennially elected board from a single slate. Some positions can be held by two people, depending



President Lesleigh Rizzi and Director Liz Rice of Deledda International School with a young student and her father at the presentation of scholarship awarded to her from the club.

on the time available that the ladies can dedicate to the position. Finding candidates can be a challenge at times but this too depends on the actual membership at the time. Often new members are more likely to accept a position, especially if they do not have young families.

#### **What kind of events do you have in your club?**

We have an activities chairperson who organizes our monthly board meetings, general meetings and brunches, a Christmas lunch, an annual Women's Day lunch, closing lunch and extra cultural events that may occur during the year.

Our first vice-president is the Christmas bazaar party planner. She has several committees and most members are involved. Lots of cheer and goodwill in this position along with endless hours of work. A true labor of love for the less fortunate.

Fundraising:  
Annual  
Christmas  
Bazaar

**Do you raise money for any particular cause?**

We have a line amount in our annual dues for FAWCO (dues and web fees).

There is also a guaranteed line amount for the necessary materials to continue the Heart Pillow Project, through which we have donated 4,000 pillows since we started in 2010. We also have donated €8,000 to the Breast Cancer Unit at San Martino Hospital in Genoa.

At our Christmas bazaar, we raise money to support the children that are “wards of the court” that stay with the nuns at San Vincenzo home.

**Ann tells us a little bit about Genoa and Italy**

I was so in love and so young when I arrived in Genoa 47 years ago. I didn't speak any Italian and really didn't know what to expect. However, after five months I joined the Italian workforce at the local international hospital, as being the only American nurse and was given the nickname “Barbie” after the doll. After that I never looked back and my new discoveries continue in my adopted home and I am very happy in this small city hidden between the seashore and the hilltops. There are also plenty of cultural events as this is the home of Christopher Columbus and pesto sauce.



A club visit to Italy's oldest confectioner, Pietro Romanengo. (above)  
Made with love! Heart Pillows crafted by members for breast cancer patients. (left)  
On the move! A shopping trip to Serravalle. (below)

Smaller amounts at our monthly meeting can sometimes be raised through, for example, book, bag and accessories sales. During the club year the board will review requests for fundraising projects and often a vote is put to the membership. For example this year we collected toiletries for a battered women's shelter on the occasion of Women's Day holiday and we held a gala concert event at a historical site with another non-profit to raise money that sent Ukrainian children to summer camp.

One of our most popular fundraisers is the monthly cocktails that are held in members' homes. The club buys the liquor and the guests bring the food and pay a fixed donation of €10 per person.

Of course we have the Porto Antico area on the seafront, where you can find an abundance of eateries, conference centers, sport arena, the ice skating rink and cinemas. The Aquarium (27,000 square meters and 12,000 animal species) is also located in the Porto Antico area. The Old Town with its historical buildings and many museums including the Rolli Palaces, which are a UNESCO World Heritage since 2006, are just a few steps away.

I am a water person so I am living my dream. I enjoy being close to the port area. That gives me access to the cruise ships, which permits me to have many adventures on the high seas. Walks and picnics on the local beaches can be enjoyed all year as we have mild winter temperatures.



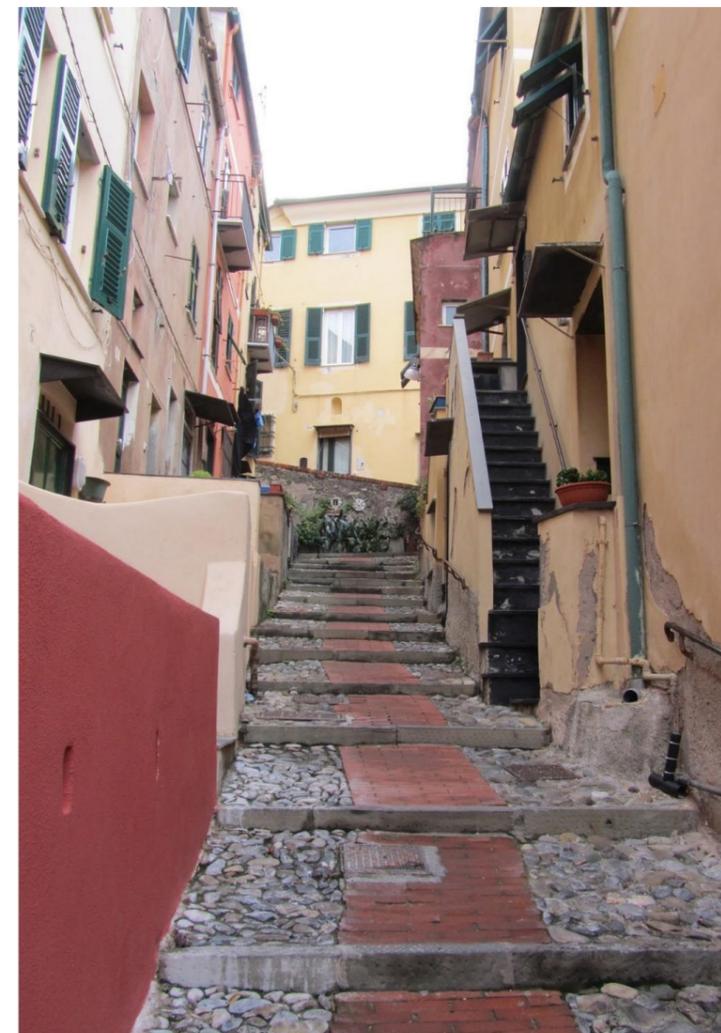
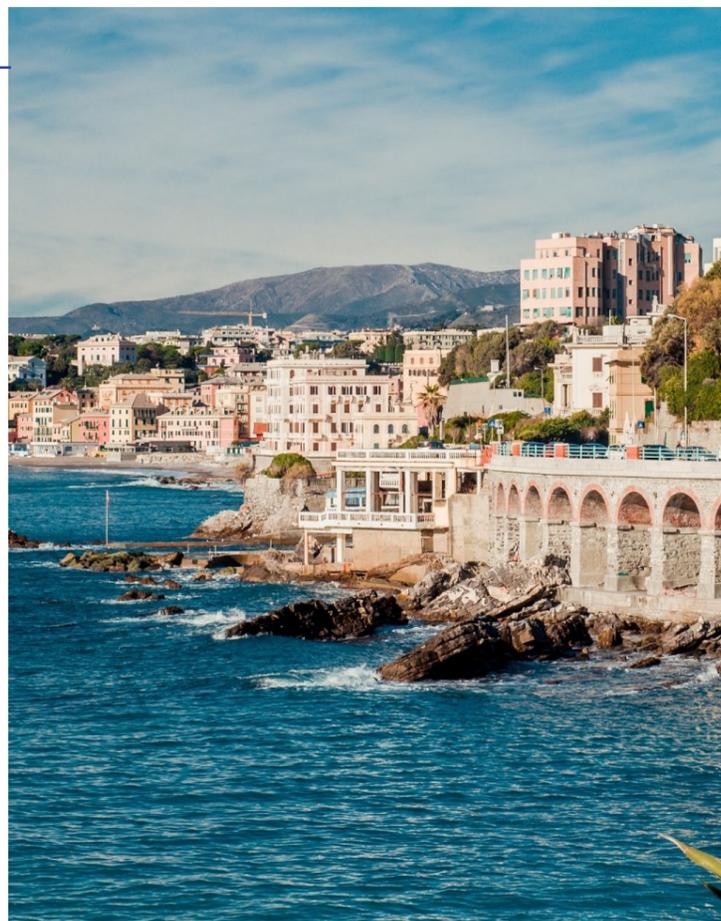
There are also public water buses, whale watching and boat companies that do short trips down the coast, so it is easy to visit many of the smaller fishing villages. Lots to do for the locals and tourists.

**Interesting tradition/traits of the locals**  
Genoa's traditions hold many wonders to be experienced and discovered in order to appreciate the spirit of its centuries-old history.

San Giovanni Battista is the saint protector of Genoa and he is celebrated on the day of his birth: June 24th.

The Regatta of the Ancient Maritime Republics is a sports event centered around a historical re-enactment first established in 1955 to commemorate the endeavors and rivalries of the most famous maritime republics (Venice, Pisa, Amalfi and Genoa).

There are about 200 religious processions from spring until November. Just before Christmas every year the city hosts the Festival of Circus Acts from countries in Europe. Then April offers music festivals and October, the Science Festival.



## Discover your path

PRINCIPLED | OPEN-MINDED | COMPASSIONATE

**TASIS England** inspires students to become life-long learners who are internationally-minded and committed to service leadership as they discover their own pathway to the future.

- Leading co-ed international school for day (ages 3-18) & boarding (ages 13-18)
- Average class size of 12 students
- Exceptional education that fizzes with positivity and starts from Lower School
- We help your child find their own voice in Middle School
- International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme & Advanced Placement (AP) courses
- 60 nationalities & 30 languages spoken on campus
- 45 minutes from central London & 20 minutes from Heathrow Airport



Open Events  
BOOK YOUR PLACE  
[tasisengland.org/discover](https://tasisengland.org/discover)



THE AMERICAN SCHOOL IN ENGLAND

[tasisengland.org](https://tasisengland.org) | [ukadmissions@tasisengland.org](mailto:ukadmissions@tasisengland.org) | +44 (0)1932 582316

# Knitting Support and Healing to Uplift Cancer Survivors

*Mieke Prins, a member of AWC Antwerp, stitches her love of knitting and helping others through her club's Caring Hands group, making a very unique item for breast cancer patients.*



Mieke Prins enjoying life in Antwerp.

**I** grew up in Amsterdam as an only child. When I was born, my father was 55 and my mother 38 years old. I had a very sheltered childhood. I do not have any memories of the war. My mom told me that, due to a lack of transport, I would be very willing to walk long distances, and one day even walked 10 km as a three-year-old. One of my favorite dishes was fried fish, *scholletjes* in Dutch.

My mom was the only child in her family who dared to venture from the village in which she grew up to move to Amsterdam. I can remember that we always had lots of visitors, and that the house was filled with family members over the summer holidays. How my mom managed to find space for all the visitors to sleep, and cook for all, remains a puzzle to this day.

I love acting, singing and dancing and was selected to perform in many school plays, in both primary and secondary school. I enjoyed this very much. My favorite role was in a play called *Zomerztheid* where I was a one of a group of seventeen-year-old friends.

### Life changes

My mother was very modern in her thinking and always told me "Never be dependent on a man, learn to stand on your own feet." And this was something that stayed with me for the rest of my life. I wanted to have a technical education, as I was very good with mathematics and science, but my high school advised against it. I instead went



A finished example of the knitted breast prosthesis.



Mieke concentrating on knitting the "knockers".



Fun times with husband and grandchildren. (far left)  
Celebrating with AWC Antwerp members. (left)  
Mieke with a special friend. (below)

prostheses to more hospitals. I have received kind notes to tell me how happy patients are with the prostheses. It is very rewarding to receive emails like this.

***The wildest thing I have ever done is ...***

The wildest thing I have ever done was to hitchhike with a friend in Spain in the early 1960s. We went by train to San Sebastian, where we met two guys and hitchhiked across Spain to Madrid. This was quite an

adventure. This is not something that I would do again! I often picked up hitchhikers when I was younger, but not anymore. I also loved to participate in public speaking and was a member of ITC (International Training in Communication) for several years and represented Belgium at many events, even in Japan. Public speaking gave me a lot of confidence and it is something that I will always recommend to others.

***Back in time to ...***

Even if it was possible to travel back in time I really would not know where to go. I have lived in so many places, some that I liked very much and others that were just okay! New York, as a younger person, was one of my favorite places but not any longer. It is too busy with too many people!

***Dream vacation***

I travelled so much when I was younger, always for two to four weeks, that I am very happy with short trips now. We were able to travel extensively in the USA (visited 38 of the states) and Australia, New Zealand, Asia (Japan, Philippines, Indonesia, Singapore) and most countries in Europe. My ideal holiday now is a few days away to a nice hotel where my husband and I can swim, enjoy good food and read.

I am very content with my life. I have a lot to be thankful for: my family, my house, good health, friends and hobbies.

to a teacher training college to become an elementary teacher. My first job was as a Grade 1 teacher in a school in Amsterdam, a class with 36 children. This was after a period of being an *au pair* in London.

I met my husband at a house party in 1959 and we got married in 1965. I loved the concept of logical thinking and trained to become a programmer at New York University when we moved to New York. I worked for a department group in Manhattan.

My husband and I moved around a lot for his work and lived for more than 25 years in five different countries (England, Spain, USA, Germany and France). We have two sons, one living in Belgium and the other in Colorado, and three grandchildren. Our sons went to French schools when we lived in France, then to the International School of Düsseldorf, and ended their high school education at the Antwerp International School.

***Involvement in your hobby and passion***

My mother taught me how to knit; this was also included in the curriculum at the teacher training college. I do sew and crochet, but I don't like it very much! Knitting is my favorite. I have been a member of AWC Antwerp for many years and have always been involved with activities within the club. Twelve years ago,



I learned about a project of the club making heart-shaped pillows for breast cancer patients; this group was later named Caring Hearts. I love doing all kinds of hand work, and quickly became involved with the Caring Hearts group, and have been an active member ever since. COVID-19 was no deterrent to the group in making pillows, as we decided to do the work at home. My involvement with making the pillows is to stuff them and to do the hand sewing before the pillows are packed for delivery to the

hospitals. We now meet in person again and I always try to be at the pillow parties. It is such a rewarding activity to be involved with: the ability to make something that will help others.

Five years ago, I visited my son and his family in Colorado. While there I read an article about Knitted Knockers, knitted breast prostheses. I was very excited and thought that this could be a good addition to the Caring Hearts project. I discussed this with the group, which was initially a little skeptical about the value, but since has come around to support it wholeheartedly. We now are a small group of women, called the Caring Hands, which meets once a month to either knit or crochet the prostheses. But we also knit baby

blankets, soft toys, comfort bags, baby jerseys and shawls. The Caring Hands group is a wonderful group of women who enjoy and encourage each other, and give tips and exchange patterns. We sell some of the finished goods through the web shop of the club. The concept of the knitted or crocheted prostheses has developed so much that we now make prostheses in different bra sizes, a good alternative to the silicone prostheses normally issued by the hospitals. Our vision is to expand this project and to supply

# Playing Music, Hearing a New Song

*Heather O'Donnell, a member of AIWC Cologne and AIWC Düsseldorf, was a concert pianist until chronic pain forced her to pivot her passion to helping others.*



Heather O'Donnell, psychological counselor.

**I** grew up in a suburb of New York City. When I was six, I started studying with an incredibly inspiring pianist, Charles Milgrim. He gave me an insight into a world completely different from the suburban life I was otherwise living. I'll never forget the day he brought a score of J.S. Bach to our lesson, ceremoniously placed it on the piano, and indicated that life would never be the same after diving into this miraculous music. Although he could be a bit scary to my smaller self, he was also tender-hearted and would occasionally tear-up when he heard or spoke about the music of Chopin or Schumann. I worked with him twice a week for over 90 minutes for several years and regard him as a second father. He was inspiring, demanding, loving and a beautiful model for living a musician's life.

### **After leaving home**

After studies, I began working as a musician, moved for a year to Paris, then back to New York, right after 9/11. That was such a strange year, I decided to get the hell out of there and move to Berlin with my husband. We stayed in Berlin for 13 years. I had a good and challenging career as a musician based in Berlin until 2010. During that time I played solo concerts and worked as an ensemble musician throughout the world. Some memorable concerts were in Moscow in October 2002 during a hostage stand-off (luckily the theater I was in was not affected, but the

**H**eather at the piano, as a child of six in 1979.



Heather's last concert as a professional musician: at the Neue Nationalgalerie in Berlin, 2010.

director of my theater was constantly on the phone with musicians in the occupied theater); concerts and masterclasses in China; a series of benefit concerts in Jordan; collaborations with dancers in Hungary and France; and many many more wonderful experiences.

### Life changes

In the latter stages of my career, hand and arm injuries intensified and became chronic, making it difficult for me to continue working as a musician. Pain was almost always present while playing, and what had been a supremely enjoyable activity (daily work at the piano) became an enormous burden. After years of visits to so many doctors and various therapists, I decided that the only sensible thing left to do was to leave my professional work as a musician behind and start another course

of study. I went back to school at age 37 as a bachelor's degree student at the Freie Universität in Berlin. It was really an exercise in "Beginner's Mind" because all the skills and accolades I may have collected in my life as a musician had very little weight there. I had to get tutored by a 19 year old who was a statistics wizard, since I was god-awful at statistics. It was an exercise in humility as I limped through very difficult courses in psychology, experimental design, statistics and probability.

After completing my bachelors degree, we decided to move back to the USA in 2015. My husband and I both worked at the Eastman School of Music for four years, but decided during those tumultuous years in the USA that Germany would be a better environment for us to raise our daughter. We moved to Düsseldorf in 2019. In 2020 I founded a center supporting

performing artists: TGR The Green Room in Cologne-Nippes.

### Involvement in your "new profession"

My calling now is to assist performing artists as a psychological counselor and director of a center dedicated to artists' holistic health. I find this work enormously gratifying. Since March of 2022, we have focused on helping Ukrainian performers find their foothold in Germany. The relationships formed with Ukrainian artists and Russian dissident artists have been inspiring. My work in this field was precipitated by a difficult experience (chronic injury and the loss of my initial life trajectory), but I am so grateful to have found an outlet for those experiences, especially if it eases the difficulties for others experiencing similar things.

### Training and education

I went back to school and started from the beginning, as a undergraduate student, and eventually got my master's degree in Health and Prevention Psychology. I'm currently working towards becoming a Systemic Arts Therapist. In my "second-life" training, I really missed having intensive mentorship relationships. When you study music, so often your primary teacher plays an essential role in your development. There was not any equivalent to this in my new studies, but I did draw on the help of other students: especially older women. We called ourselves the *Alte Geiste* (Old Souls) and were a group of bachelor's degree students in our 30s and 40s who had previously done something else: a former midwife, a photographer, a film director, an actress, etc.

### Taking it to the next level

The first step was to just give up and admit defeat. I had been clinging onto my old role as a pianist for many years because it provided a framework for my core identity, and it was very scary to leave this behind. But my body was screaming at me: "Stop with this! I can't do it any longer!" So, I had no choice. For many years there was a difficult process of finding out who I was, without the cloak of a musician to hide behind. Although the process was difficult and painful, I'm so glad I went through it. No one is "just" a musician, or "just" anything for that matter, and I'm glad I got to know myself independent from that highly entrenched and very fixed source of identity. My new profession is quite challenging. There are very few psychologists specialized in work with performing artists, and even fewer centers devoted to the mission of



assisting performers. This means that the professional work often needs to be carved out "of nothing." There are few precedents. There's a strong need to justify the urgency of this work in attracting funding from people (many times people from the financial, policy and banking sectors) who believe that the performer's life is just a dream-come-true, or a charmed exercise in turning a hobby into a profession. It's a challenge to let people know about the dangers and risks associated with the professional lives of performing artists. Since I began intensively working with refugee Ukrainian artists and dissident Russian artists following the outbreak of the war, I sense possibilities for a wider contribution. Unfortunately, the world currently appears to be headed for greater social instability and forced migration. Artists often occupy public and exposed platforms, in which any statements they make critical of the oppressive regimes might lead to dangerous personal and professional situations. I believe that a large part of my work in the future will be devoted to helping refugee and dissident performing artists settle into Germany and begin their professional lives here.

### **Biggest challenges**

The biggest challenge was trying to figure out how to start again in mid-life without being a huge burden on my family. My earnings as a musician certainly weren't making us wealthy, but they were part of our family's financial organization. When I had to quit in 2010, I switched over to teaching piano while studying psychology. Teaching is a profession I greatly admire but unfortunately feel I'm not that good at. There were quite a few moments where I feared I was putting my family at risk by shaking my life up. Luckily, the adage "where there's a will, there's a way" proved true. And there wasn't just a will, but a sense of necessity – I couldn't keep up my professional tasks as a musician. The other jump into the unknown was in 2019 when we moved from the USA to Düsseldorf. I left a decent job as an adjunct professor in a music conservatory. Starting The Green Room was a big gamble, especially because we opened in October of 2020 and had to lock down because of the pandemic from November until the following June. The work at TGR has been enormously meaningful and enriching, but still not very helpful in contributing to our family's financial wellbeing. I currently have some major grant applications out that I hope will help solidify the financial security of the organization by providing a regular salary.

### **What the future holds**

As I mentioned before, I'm currently applying for a grant funded by the European Commission that I intensely hope will come through. This grant would enable The Green Room to be a center that could provide artist residencies for refugee and dissident artists from around the world. These artists would be integrated into the already existing infrastructure of The Green Room, and it would be a fantastic expansion of our mission in supporting artists. If this works, we will start in April of 2023 with the program *TGR Künstlerhafen* (i.e. TGR Artists' Safe Harbor). We would partner with the wonderful Finnish organization "Artists-at-Risk" which could help with the process of identifying artists who would fit into this model well, and with issues like visa acquisition and initial travel. Please keep your fingers crossed.

### **A typical day**

My daily schedule varies greatly. There's a lot of administrative work to take care of – emails, scheduling, the nitty-gritty of running an organization, but I also have clients, meetings with partners and collaborators, and if I'm lucky, I can practice the piano a little and read. I'm looking forward to a day when I can expand my administrative team from one person (me) to more people to share the responsibilities of running The Green Room and provide input and inspiration for the future path of the organization.

### **Childhood story that best explains the person you are today**

When I started 1st grade, I came home with a picture I had drawn with three scrawled words underneath: "I can run." My mom thought the picture was funny, because I had the most grim, most stubborn expression on my stick-figure face. She framed it, and it has been a symbol for my stubbornness

Heather speaking in the Green Room, a center for performing artists.

and determination ever since. This stubbornness got me into trouble: I didn't listen to my body's signals, so I really got injured as a pianist, and sometimes I wonder if I shouldn't step back from projects I'm deep into and take a breather and get some perspective.

### **Something you love now, that you never could have imagined you would like**

I love knitting. I can't practice the piano for very long now, because the pain signals tend to come back after c. 60 minutes. Knitting gives me something wonderful for my fingers to do. It's a huge stress reliever, and I'm torturing my family with one homemade sweater after another at Christmas time.

### **The wildest thing I have ever done is ...**

... move with my husband to Berlin in 2002. We had no idea how we would support ourselves. My first job was as a house cleaner and I quickly got fired because I had no idea how to do that job well. That was a rough year, but we pulled through and got integrated fairly quickly into the legendary music scene in Berlin.

### **One thing you would change about yourself**

I would learn to relax and enjoy life more. I've been doing a lot of meditation since 2016, but the "art of living" is still elusive ... I like working, and I finally like the work I'm doing. I hope that the second half of my life will have more space for enjoying this beautiful earth we inhabit.



# “Let Them Eat Cake!”

*Joanna Loizou, a member of AWA Vienna, is a trained chef but a self-taught baker. She has made the transition from a professional chef to a cake-loving, self-employed business owner.*



Joanna Loizou, with one of her fabulous creations.

**I** grew up mostly in Limassol, Cyprus, from the age of seven. Great childhood, loved school and after-school beach time.

### **From Cyprus to Vienna.....**

I had no plan to even visit Austria for a holiday if I am totally honest. My then boyfriend, now husband, was already living here and working so I came over for a short holiday and ended up staying. Still not sure how this happened. I worked in a few restaurants in various positions, including The Albertina as head pastry chef before deciding to become my own boss. That is how Jojo's Cakes & Bakes was born really.

### **Training and education**

At first I studied accounting and was half way through my ACCA auditing qualification but found it quite monotonous and unexciting. So I went to England to study Professional Culinary Arts. This was fun, as I have a huge passion for food and cultural cuisines.

As a qualified chef and a self-taught baker, I did take an exam in Austria to demonstrate my skills to the “meisterkonditorei” in order to get a certificate first, as this is needed in Austria for any self-employed person wanting to open a business in certain fields.

### **Taking your passion to the next level**

As a trained chef I wouldn't really say it was a hobby of mine. I have always had



Joanna tending to her bees.

a passion for food, so cakes came quite naturally to me. So after years of family and friends telling me I needed to share my yummy desserts with others, I started my own business.

**Biggest challenges and experiences**

The biggest challenge I would say, as with most self-employed people, is learning your worth/ value and charging for this! Accepting no less than what you learn you deserve and sticking to those standards always.

Simply opening my own business in a country with quite strict rules/paperwork needed was itself quite an experience. I appreciate these hurdles however, as it means my business along with other food service businesses is well regulated.

**Favorite way to inspire others**

Holding classes, encouraging others to bake and also giving tips to those who wish to bake their own cakes is my way to get others involved with my passion.

**What the future holds**

Quite a few things are on the horizon and will remain secret for now, but one that is already happening which I can talk about is that I am now also a beekeeper and have my first 70 kg of honey to sell from my five hives. My husband and I do this together as a hobby.

**A typical day**

As mentioned, baking is not a hobby but my career. I wake up around 7:00 a.m., start work around 9:00 a.m. and depending whether I have many cakes or administrative work I would finish anywhere between 6:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m.

**Dream vacation**

If money were not an object, I would travel to a Greek island with my family.

**Something you love now, that you never could have imagined you would like**

I was always afraid of bees, but now that I am a beekeeper I find them fascinating.

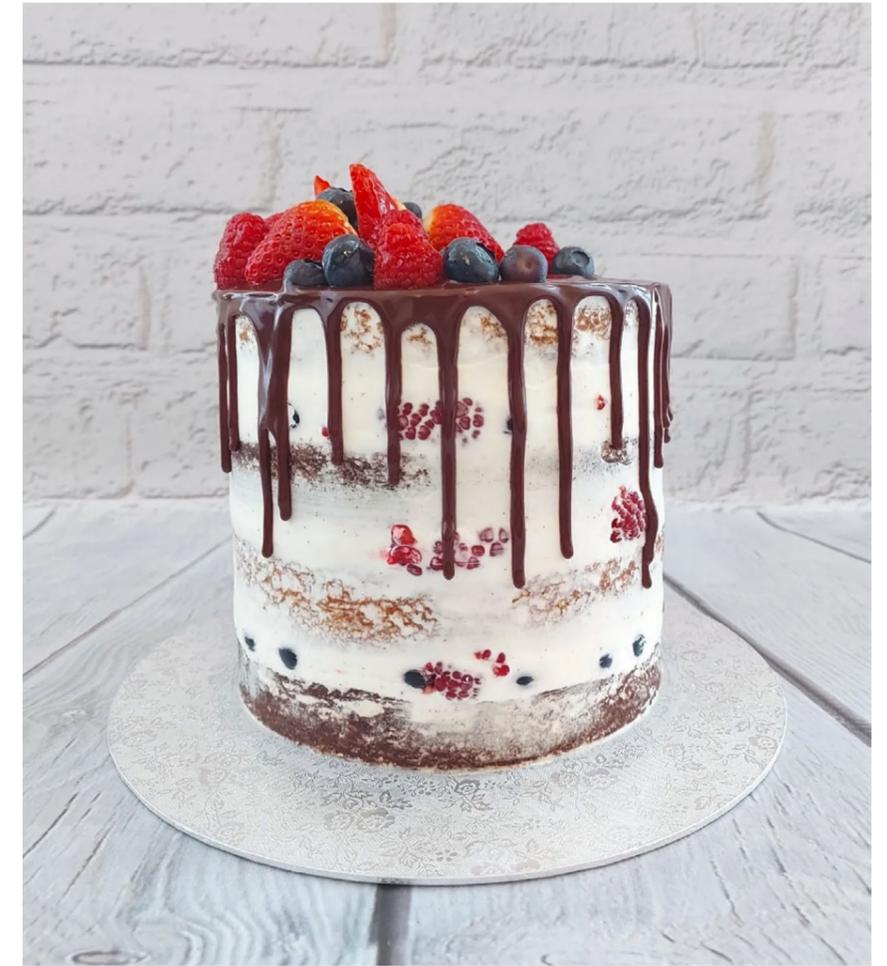
**One thing you would change about yourself**

Absolutely nothing! Being proud of who you are and appreciating what you have is the key to happiness.

Honey production from Joanna's bees.



Selection of cakes and cookies from Jojo's Cakes & Bakes



“... an utterly charming Eastern European take on *Eat, Pray, Love*.” —Chanticleer Reviews



# Odyssey of Love

A Memoir of  
Seeking & Finding

LINDA JÄMSÉN

## Inspiring Reads: *Odyssey of Love: A Memoir of Seeking and Finding*

*Linda Jämsén is a member of the American Women's Club of Finland and resides in Helsinki, her adopted home of 19 years. Originally from New York, she studied piano at a young age and graduated with a BA in Music from Bard College. Also an avid choral singer, Linda has performed with groups in Hungary, Finland, Israel, and the UK.*



**W**hen Linda doesn't receive the marriage proposal from her partner Hank on her 41<sup>st</sup> birthday, she reluctantly visits Angelica, a psychic who predicts that she will soon leave him for a romantic and classical music-filled Odyssey in Europe. There, a "Russian icon" will lead to Linda's future husband, a "tall man with glasses." Eager to reignite her passion for music and find The One, Linda leaves for Budapest, where she sings in a chorus and teaches English. Soon, sparks are flying in and out of the classroom with several attractive men who meet Angelica's description. Is one of them her intended? And where is the Russian icon to guide her? *Odyssey of Love* is a story about taking risks in mid-life

and staying true to your dreams. This intimate memoir also reveals how chance encounters can totally and quickly change your life – for the better. Yes, even in your forties!

### **What was the inspiration for the book?**

A memoir, *Odyssey of Love* was inspired by real life adventures. For almost three years, I lived in Budapest, where I sang in a chorus, taught English and also explored other European cities, all the while searching for "the tall man with glasses" foreseen by Angelica. During this time, I was tempted by several romantic close calls, but determined to "settle down, not settle for." (This became my mantra in the book.) The way I finally met "him" and the circumstances in which the Russian icon was

revealed were so incredible that I felt compelled to write about them.

**How long did it take to write the book?**

It took well over ten years to complete *Odyssey* for a variety of reasons, mostly because I had no intention of publishing at first. After my father died suddenly before my wedding, I was advised to write about him as part of the healing process. While writing these personal stories, others emerged from my time overseas and later became scenes in *Odyssey*. Over time, these evolved into chapters, then became sections of the book. Once the story arc was clear and I'd written the first fifty pages, I pitched the open pages at two conferences in New York and was encouraged by the positive feedback I received. I kept going, spending more time on the manuscript, but was still conflicted about sharing intimate details of my life. Also, there were times when I became very involved in musical projects, and my creative energies were focused elsewhere. However, when the pandemic hit and all my rehearsals and concerts were canceled, *Odyssey* got my full attention. During such a distressing time, I thought some readers might find hope in my story or enjoy armchair traveling to exotic destinations. After I made the decision to self-publish, things moved quickly.

**What kind of research do you do before beginning a book?**

Due to the nature of memoir, I experienced everything firsthand, so there was little need for research at the beginning. However, as I delved more into details of place and situations, I turned to the treasure trove of souvenirs, diaries, and photos I had kept from those years. I also returned to a few *Odyssey* locations, such as Budapest, Jerusalem, and Amsterdam, so I could more aptly describe my former experiences there.

**What is the most important thing you want readers to take from your book?**

I think the number one takeaway from *Odyssey* is that you must live life on your terms, not someone else's. Once I realized I was settling and that I deserved to fulfill my dreams—or at least try to—I took that leap of faith and moved overseas. It's never too late to take a chance and start again if that is your heart's desire. There is no age limit for embarking on new adventures.

**As a writer, what would you choose as your mascot/avatar/spirit animal?**

Mine is "Ollie Owl." Owls can symbolize transitions, remind us to listen to our intuition, and help us unravel life's mysteries. Years ago, during a time of personal crisis, I was walking in the Finnish forest in broad daylight, when an owl brushed against my hat and then perched on



a tree branch in front of me. It turned its head a few times and allowed me to take photos. It seemed to want my attention and then flew away. Afterward, I felt it was a message from my father, whose nickname had been "Ollie Owl," that everything would work out in the end. Soon after, it did. After telling this story to friends, I have received numerous owl-related gifts and

have a few birds "perched" on the bookcases behind my desk.

**Favorite childhood book**

At age eleven, I read Anne Frank's *The Diary of a Young Girl*, which touched me deeply. The way she wrote about her experiences inspired me to start keeping a diary, a

recommendations by other authors. One review for *The Keeper of Lost Things* by Ruth Hogan interested me because the main character is an aging author who has been collecting objects and trying to reunite them with their owners. As a sentimentalist who is surrounded by objects from loved ones in my home, I understand how something as simple as a coat button or a teacup can suddenly transport you back to a particular fond memory of the person it once belonged to. An unusual premise for a book.

**If you could tell your younger writing-self anything, what would it be?**

Write the story that you would want to read and be true to yourself. When I pitched my manuscript to agents years ago, I was advised to rewrite it as fiction. I refused and decided not to pursue traditional publishing. Instead, I self-published *Odyssey*, as it didn't feel right to share intimate details of my life in the third person or fictionalize characters as important as my future husband or parents.

Also, be patient with the writing process and don't force creativity or put unreasonable demands on your time. Years ago, when an agent asked to see my completed manuscript, I pushed myself to the point where I got sick. The manuscript was far from finished and needed final editing, but I still felt pressured because someone in the publishing industry was interested in reading it. Follow your instinct, it's there for a reason. Good luck!



*Books presented in the Inspiring Reads feature are available for purchase via the FAWCO website in the Books by Members or Books by Clubs sections. Enjoy!*

practice I continue to this day. Part of my memoir is set in Amsterdam and includes a visit to the Secret Annex, where Anne and her family and others had hidden. I wrote this section in diary format as a tribute to Anne.

**What are you reading now?**

On Instagram, I read a lot of book

# Giving Love with Bear Hugs

*Elyzabeth Simpson, a member of AWC Berlin, rediscovers her love of knitting, taught to her by her late mother. Starting with one toy bear as a gift, she now knits them for an HIV project.*



Elyzabeth Simpson uses her knitting skills in support of the Mother Bear Project.

**I** grew up mostly in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, but also spent parts of my childhood outside Chicago and in Texas. I was very active in the Girl Scouts as a child. The service projects left a lasting impact on me – whether it was a food drive for the local food bank or adopting a family at the holidays. I learned early on how important it is to give back to the community and it gave me a good feeling to help others. Girl Scouts also developed my love for the outdoors. I attended both day and overnight camps in the summer and learned lots of useful skills like how to build a fire and basic cooking. I also learned how to adapt to new situations and different people, as spending a few days out in the wilderness with a group of pre-teen girls isn't always easy! I was also very competitive when it came to cookie sales. I always met or exceeded my goals and was proud to sew all the badges on my uniform.

### After leaving home

My first stop was the University of Kansas, where I studied Theater and Film with a minor in French. After graduating, I had two dreams: to become a famous actress; and to live in France. After spending about two years trying to make my acting dreams come true, I decided to focus on my French dreams, so I found a business school in Angers, where I was accepted into the European Studies and Marketing Communications master's program. An internship was part of the curriculum and I ended up getting hired by the company where



Elyzabeth and all her Nancy bears.



Elyzabeth makes the biggest golf shot of the day!



Elyzabeth's Brownie troop (she is the one not in uniform). (left)

Elyzabeth and her mom. (right)

Elyzabeth and her husband at their wedding. (far right)



I interned in Rennes. I later moved to Paris, where I worked for the Corporate Communications and Public Affairs team at Euro Disney. Part of my job was being the “voice” of the president; I wrote his speeches for the annual shareholders meeting and quarterly earnings statements. It was also such fun to see the “behind-the-scenes” work at the theme park. In total I spent almost nine years in France – so at least one of my dreams came true (not everyone can say that)!

### **Life changes**

My husband is the reason why I am in Berlin now. We actually met in the years between my graduation from university and moving to France. I was working at a golf resort in Florida that was popular with European tourists (my French skills were very useful there). The man who would later become my husband was visiting as a tourist and we spent a few evenings together – I already knew I was going to France, so we exchanged emails and promised to keep in touch. Of course people rarely keep those promises, and I didn't contact him until a few years later when I was moving to Paris to take the job with Euro Disney. I sent out a mass email to all my friends to tell them the good news. My now husband got in touch to say he was coming to Paris for work and would I like to meet up with him? I said yes and 15+ years later and with a few stops in-between in Jackson, Mississippi, and Toronto, Canada – here we are back in his hometown of Berlin!

### **Involvement in your hobby and passion**

My mother taught me to knit when I was young, but it didn't turn into a serious hobby until I was facing the cold winters in Canada. I knit all kinds of things (except sweaters!), but my main love is making bears for the Mother Bear Project. The bears are knit for children in emerging nations who are affected by HIV/AIDS. Knitters from around the world create bears from the same pattern, but somehow each one turns out unique. When the bears are distributed to the children, volunteers often take pictures of the children with their new bear. It is such a joy to see a child hugging something you made and it definitely sparks me to make more bears! I also like that the bears are offered unconditionally with the only message being of comfort, hope, and love.

I found the Mother Bear Project when my niece was celebrating her first birthday. I wanted to make her a knitted toy and I thought a teddy bear would be perfect. I looked around online for an easy pattern and found the Mother Bear website – I made my donation and received the pattern in about a week. Originally, I thought I would make one bear for my niece and one bear for the project, but more than 150 bears later, I haven't stopped!

### **Training and education**

When I took up knitting again as an adult, I needed to relearn the basics, like casting-on, knitting and purling, and what all the

different abbreviations mean. Luckily I had YouTube to mentor me – just type whatever you don't understand into YouTube and it's easy to find someone to explain it to you.

### **Taking your hobby to the next level**

In December 2018, my mother passed away just nine months after her diagnosis of stage IV metastatic breast cancer. It was a real shock because breast cancer runs in our family and my mother always took her breast health very seriously. In 2019, I decided to name all of my bears Nancy, after my mother. I made 27 bears that year, with the very last one completed on December 22<sup>nd</sup>, my mother's birthday. Those 27 bears also brought my overall total to 100 and I officially joined the 100 bear club!

### **Favorite way to inspire others**

I host a creative ladies group for women who like to knit, crochet, and sew. I love meeting kindred spirits through crafting. It's inspiring to see the work of others and we all enjoy both giving and receiving praise on our different projects. The group is also a great place to get tips on patterns and yarns/fabrics as well as other non-craft-related things like babysitters and restaurant recommendations.

### **Childhood story that best explains the person you are today**

My mother held a master's in Chemistry when more typical study fields for women were teaching and nursing. She worked most of her career in medical research – a male-dominated field, but she made her mark. She always made me believe that I could do anything I wanted to and that being a woman was a strength.

### **Something you love now, that you never could have imagined you would like**

I am a very avid golfer and I took up the sport in my early 30s. When I was younger, I thought it was a boring game, only for old people. But now I have a real appreciation for golf as it's one of the few sports where men and women can play together equally and it suits both young and old. Not to mention, if I didn't play – I would probably never see my husband on the weekends!

### **The wildest thing I have ever done is ...**

The wildest thing I have ever done is marry a German! I chose to study French starting in seventh grade, mainly because the food days (croissants and chocolate) sounded better than the other language choices! My first French teacher (Madame Reiser) instilled a love of the language in me and I continued my studies through to University. My first experience in France was on my high school graduation trip through Europe with my mother. I later came back for a homestay with a French family, but I always knew I wanted to come back and live there full time. With all of my love for the French language and culture, it is still a shock that I married a German man!

### **Dream vacation**

If money was no object, I'd love to spend a week playing golf with my husband in Japan. I have been there once before and find the culture fascinating. Golf is a very popular sport there and the Japanese have a true love for nature – a combination that must make for a spectacular golf experience!

# The Importance of Social Connections

*Chris Czyszczewski and her family have lived all over the world. But she and her husband decided that, for the sake of family connections, the right place to settle was near their adult children.*

**M**y family immigrated to the US when I was a baby. I'm the third of seven children. My parents were from Transylvania, Romania, and were refugees in Austria after WWII when I was born. My husband Joe is the son of Polish immigrants, so we both have strong ties to Europe. We had a vacation home in Munich for 14 years, where I was a member of the International Club.

## **Who would have thought ... that I'd be living in Houston!**

My parents lived in a small village in northern Transylvania. Following the twelfth century, most of Transylvania had a predominantly Germanic population, and they were part of this "nation within a nation." During World War II, most of the villagers fled to Austria. Church World Service, a small congregation in central Washington, sponsored my family and three others to immigrate. They were our support in assimilating into the culture and learning the language. Joe grew up in Chicago in a close-knit Polish neighborhood. His father immigrated as an adult and his mother's family came when she was a teen. The families got together for every celebration, so he knew his maternal grandparents and all the aunts, uncles and cousins. Joe and I lived several places in the



Chris Czyszczewski

US and spent a year in Germany while he worked for IBM. Our children followed this pattern, living in many places before now.

We recently moved to Houston from Boulder, Colorado, to be near our kids and grandchildren. I know this isn't unusual, but two families made conscious choices to be here to be near family. Justin was teaching English in Munich when he met his wife Evre. She is Turkish and was also working in Munich. Her job takes her all over the world. They lived in Munich for three years before their daughter's birth. After six months in Turkey, they then moved to the mid-Atlantic area for two years. Evre is very close to her family and since they don't choose to live in Turkey, they both got approval from their employers to work remotely in Houston.



Princess granddaughter



Chris and husband Joe hiking in Colorado.



Rachel lived in Rio de Janeiro for two years, then reconnected with and married her law school friend. He had already lived in China a total of seven years by then, and they married in Hong Kong and lived there for two years. At that point, they decided to return to the US, and he took a job in Houston.

Rachel is a member of FAUSA Houston, works remotely for an Austin law firm, and has an eight-month-old son. Lisa, the oldest, works in the petroleum industry, and her family has moved all over the US. She has two teens and a pre-teen. They had lived in the Houston area once before, and, shortly after Rachel moved here, they decided to return to take up a good job offer.

While the pandemic changed attitudes in many ways, for me, the biggest change was affirming the importance of social connections. Having grown up around our families, moving all over during Joe's career, and missing our grandkids, we decided now was the time to make the move. We talked briefly about moving at some point, but when we visited Houston last winter, we realized there was nothing stopping us and we were missing opportunities with our grandkids.

We miss our friends (including FAUSA friends Liz and Kate) and living close to walking/hiking trails. We're having a good time learning about all that Houston has to offer, we're enjoying meeting new people, making new friends.

Already we are enjoying being close to our family. Our ten-year-old grandson had surgery a month ago, and we could walk to the hospital to visit him. My daughter can call me for backup if the nanny is ill, and my son sometimes asks me to drive his daughter to preschool if there's a work conflict. It's great to feel needed.

Three of the families live quite close and get together fairly often. With our oldest daughter, it's weekend meet-ups. Sometimes it's an impromptu "Who wants to meet up for dinner?" or a more organized time together like a birthday party. As soon as we had decided to move here, Rachel told me that one thing she missed out on was growing up around grandparents, so she is very excited that her son will have us nearby. That confirmed our choice. Even though there wasn't a long-term plan to move here, we love it!

Joe (above) and Chris (below) take charge of the grandkids.



Founded in 1931, FAWCO is a global women's NGO (non-governmental organization), an international network of independent volunteer clubs and associations comprising 58 member clubs in 31 countries on six continents. FAWCO serves as a resource and a voice for its members; seeks to improve the lives of women and girls worldwide, especially in the areas of human rights, health, education and the environment; advocates for the rights of US citizens overseas; and contributes to the global community through its Global Issues Teams and [The FAWCO Foundation](#), which provides development grants and education awards. Since 1997, FAWCO has held special consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council.

#### OUR MISSION STATEMENT

**FAWCO is an international federation of independent organizations whose mission is:**

- **to build strong support networks for its American and international membership;**
- **to improve the lives of women and girls worldwide;**
- **to advocate for the rights of US citizens overseas; and**
- **to mobilize the skills of its membership in support of global initiatives for education, the environment, health and human rights.**

#### ADVERTISING DISCLAIMER

FAWCO receives financial remuneration for page space from advertisers. Views expressed or benefits described in any display advertisement, advertorial or in any webpage visited online directly from these adverts are not endorsed by FAWCO.

#### COPYRIGHT 2022 FAWCO

[Inspiring Women](#)© Magazine is owned and published electronically by FAWCO.

All rights reserved. All bylined articles are copyright of their respective authors as indicated herein and are reproduced with their permission. The magazine or portions of it may not be reproduced in any form, stored in any retrieval system or transmitted in any form by any means – electronic, mechanical, photocopy or otherwise – without written consent of the publisher.



#### Photographs are integral to our magazine.

We end each issue with a page of a photograph that offers a unique perspective on its theme. The photo can be provocative, amusing, entertaining and/or a photo that you think says "That's Inspired!" for this issue.

Please contact [inspiringwomen.editor@fawco.org](mailto:inspiringwomen.editor@fawco.org)

## more about this issue

## The Inspiring Women Team



Liz Elsie Karen Open Michele Haley Kristin  
Position

For more information about this magazine, please contact a member of the **Inspiring Women** team:

Editor in Chief, Liz MacNiven, [inspiringwomen.editor@fawco.org](mailto:inspiringwomen.editor@fawco.org)

Advertising and Sponsorship Manager, Elsie Bose, [advertising@fawco.org](mailto:advertising@fawco.org)

Distribution Manager, Karen Boeker, [iwdistribution@fawco.org](mailto:iwdistribution@fawco.org)

Social Media Manager, **open position**, [iwsocialmedia@fawco.org](mailto:iwsocialmedia@fawco.org)

Features Coordinator, Michele Hendrikse Du Bois, [inspiringwomenfeatures@fawco.org](mailto:inspiringwomenfeatures@fawco.org)

Profiles Coordinator, Haley Green, [inspiringwomenprofiles@fawco.org](mailto:inspiringwomenprofiles@fawco.org)

Layout Coordinator, Kristin D. Haanæs, [inspiringwomen.layout@fawco.org](mailto:inspiringwomen.layout@fawco.org)

### Acknowledgements:

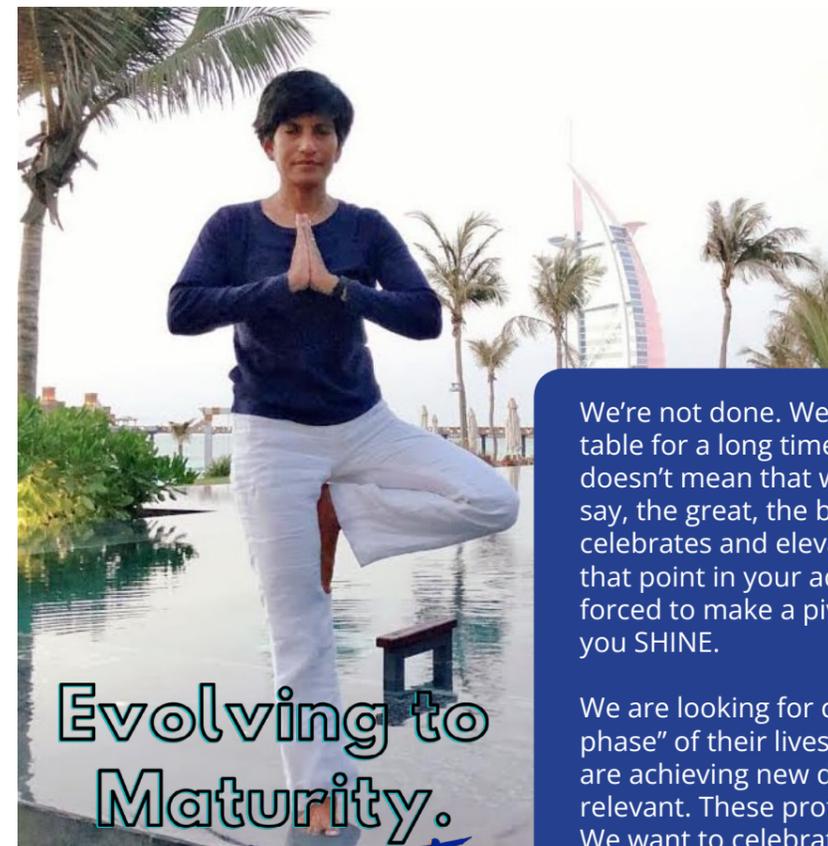
Thanks to our profilees: Bénédicte, Deborah, Elyzabeth, Heather, Jessica, Joanna, Karen, Lesley, Mieke and Suzanne. Additional thanks to Ann, Chris, Linda, Nurdan, Monica, Margie and Renuka for their work on the features.

The cover photo is of Joanna Loizou, owner and cake creator of Jojo's Cakes & Bakes, Vienna, Austria. Putting the final touches on a 3-tiered wedding cake for one of her wonderful couples. Joanna was born in England and raised in Cyprus from the age of six. She also has a passion for cooking and is a qualified chef.

Special thanks to the proofreading team of Karen Boeker (AWC Denmark), Mary Stewart Burgher (AWC Denmark), Sallie Chaballier (AAWE Paris), Carol-Lyn McKelvey (AIWC Cologne/FAUSA), Lauren Mescon (AWC Amsterdam) and Jenny Taylor (AIWC Cologne and Düsseldorf). The rest of the proofing team were unavailable for this issue, so a special thanks goes to our stand-in proofers Elsie Bose (AWG Paris/FAUSA) and Paul MacNiven.

Please note: images used in this publication are either sourced from our team, the authors themselves, or through [canva.com](https://www.canva.com) or [pixabay.com](https://www.pixabay.com).

We would like you to post the link for this issue of Inspiring Women, "Who Would Have Thought It!", in your club publications until "Evolving to Maturity. Fabulous, Fun and Fierce" is published on February 2, 2023.



# Evolving to Maturity.

## Fabulous, Fun and Fierce

our next issue

## Coming in 2023

We're not done. We have been fighting for a place at the table for a long time. And because we're moving on in years doesn't mean that we're giving up our seats. We have a lot to say, the great, the bad, the serious and the saucy! This issue celebrates and elevates "maturity"– what it means to get to that point in your adult life where you either choose or are forced to make a pivot. And you did it, or are doing it, and you SHINE.

We are looking for candidates who are taking on "the next phase" of their lives in a specific way and loving it – how they are achieving new dreams, reaching goals and remaining relevant. These profiles can be lighthearted or life changing. We want to celebrate and share these "full-life" experiences.

We are looking for features about different events that have shaped your perspective on "maturity." We want our younger members to learn about maturity and menopause from our members who know something about it – not from "the streets"! We'll share observations, some frank and some funny, about the aging process inside and out. And hear about what's next?

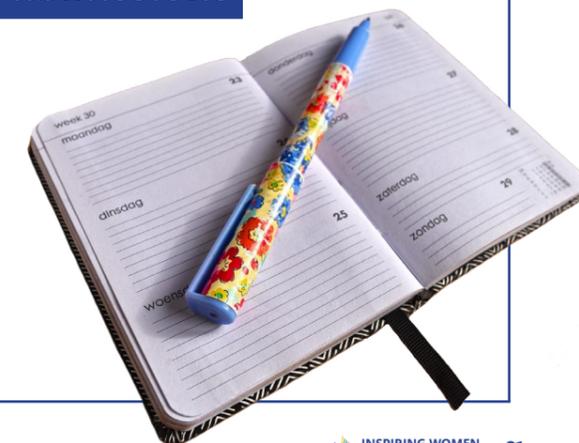
**To nominate candidates for profiles**, please send the candidate's name, candidate's email address and a brief description (50-100 words) of why you think they are inspiring and fit the theme for the issue. Send the information to [inspiringwomenprofiles@fawco.org](mailto:inspiringwomenprofiles@fawco.org)

**To submit a feature:** either on the suggested topics or one that you think fits with the theme, or wish to collaborate on one of our regular features such as, "A Club Inspires", "24 Hours in ..." and Inspiring Reads (Books by FAWCO members), please send your ideas to Michele at [inspiringwomenfeatures@fawco.org](mailto:inspiringwomenfeatures@fawco.org). Our features are 700-800 words plus photos.

### Deadline for Submissions

The deadline for submitting  
nominees, features and photos  
for our next issue is ...

## November 22<sup>nd</sup>



*That's Inspired!*



Photo of  
Jessica Mancuso  
and her sock  
animals.