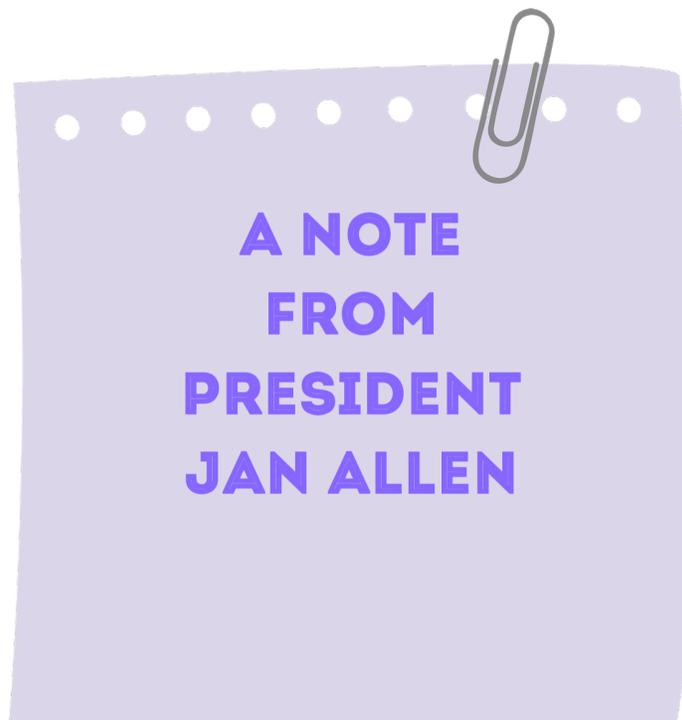




NEWSLETTER - May 2021

“Genius is 1% inspiration and 99% perspiration.” - [Thomas Edison](#) (1847-1931), American inventor and businessman, who has been described as America's greatest inventor.

Although much of our spring weather really hasn't caused much perspiration, we are always inspired by YOU, our fantastic members which are what makes this Club so amazing!!



Dear members,

We hope this newsletter finds you and your loved ones doing well! Here's a quick overview on some of the things happening "behind the scenes" in the Club.

Your board has been hard at work since closing on the clubhouse sale in March with many **administrative tasks** (more than anticipated!) such as liquidating the The Gift Boutique, canceling all final contracts related to the house, and onboarding a new accountant with much better service than our last one. We've also **streamlined our operations** to be fully virtual and we've continued building up collaboration with other clubs - especially FAWCO - so that you are aware of and can benefit from the plethora of offerings available. We received a lot of compliments for building up a **robust and interesting events calendar** (shout out to Lorraine De Bock) which we hope has helped you to stay entertained and connected as much as possible during this past year.

If you've surfed our **website** lately, you'll see a number of **improvements** to bring you more information. And take a look at the top of this newsletter: we hope you like our **new, eye-catching logo**. With its modern and avant garde feel, we think it represents the new dynamism of the Club.

Our collaboration with other clubs, increased events and heightened social media presence on Facebook and Instagram have born fruit: we are thrilled to **welcome about 30 new members** to Club which is very exciting to us all! We may increase these numbers as sadly the Canadian Club of Brussels is dissolving. They do plan to

keep their Reading Group active through Genevieve Bergiers who coordinates those activities. (See the Events calendar for more details on this Group's activities).

A heartfelt THANKS to those of you who have stepped forward to **volunteer** for us - we are very grateful for your involvement! We are still looking for more volunteers and hands on deck to get even more active with events and philanthropical activities, as well as support the running of the Club with financial advice (see below!), admin tasks and this newsletter. Please [reach out to me](#) personally if you are interested:

We are now working on the preparation for an **Extraordinary General Assembly to be held at** the end of June in order to present you with the financials for 2020 and our 2021 budget, as required by our statutes. (See more below). As everyone is so "zoomed out" we will combine this with a Membership Meeting to keep things efficient. As soon as our new accountant can commit to a date, we will send out the invites by email for that. We still plan to have the **Annual General Assembly** at the end of September. Fingers crossed that the situation with COVID-19 will allow us to do this in person as it would be lovely to see as many of you as possible in person!

In the meantime, as you will see on the [Events calendar](#), you will notice that we are planning more **outdoor and in person events** in line with the new COVID-19 regulations. Join us. Some of these great events are highlighted below, but be sure to keep a continuous eye on our calendar as there are interesting events in the works. We are especially hopeful that the new measures on June 9 are less restrictive so we can do some larger events! If there is an event you'd like to see in the calendar and/or assist in hosting, please do [let us know](#).

With best regards to you and your loved ones,

Jan

**Meet the Member:
KRISTEN CROSSON'S CONQUESTS &
CHALLENGES
Crossing Continents, COVID, Creating a
Company et cetera ...**



In what we hope will be a regular new feature in this newsletter each month, we'd like to shine the spotlight on one of our amazing AWCB members and allow you to get to know them a little bit better. For our inaugural "Meet the Member" profile, say hello to Kristen Crossen!

Technology is ticking all the boxes for Kristen Crosson this decade. Not only did she meet her English husband Chris **online** (married in 2016 and was the catalyst in bringing her to Belgium) and found us the American Women's Club of Brussels **online**, but her recently launched new business, American Groceries Belgium [AGB], has ordering **online** as the modus operandi.

Kristen's background, determination, go-getting attitude and 'joie de vivre' are amongst the list of ingredients that have helped her to realise this recipe of success.

Kristen is full of enthusiasm for her new life here in Belgium. She has only positive comments to share and although the new challenges of COVID have clipped the wings of many of us, Kristen has certainly found a silver lining in her entrepreneurial activities.

"The pandemic caused my flight to the US to be cancelled in spring 2020. On top of all the other disappointments that this meant, I realised that it also stopped me from doing my USA Goodie-Run".

Kristen soon realised that like-minded US expats felt this too. The circumstance had sparked an idea in Kristen. She became passionate about finding a solution that would also realise her lifelong dream of running a small family business with a strong personal service that made a difference.

Customer surveys, business plan writing and re-writing, government approval, wholesaler and product research, shipping options and number-crunching... took over her days for many months before AGB went live.

AGB is now up and running successfully. Word of mouth due to contented clients has added a new perspective to the business. What was thought to be a tighter client profile geographically has spread to further areas of Belgium, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and beyond.

The pandemic restrictions prevented Kristen from visiting her family in the US, but also prevented her from visiting her few close friends here in Belgium. Throughout this struggle she realised that she wanted to broaden her support network and started Googling expat women organizations and found us, the AWCB! Kristen expressed during our interview that she really appreciated the AWCB as a family away from home - *“I wish I’d done it 5 years ago when I first arrived”*.

Congratulations Kristen! Your customers are ticking all the boxes – be it click and collect or delivery. You are meeting a demand and doing it with care.

If any of our readers would like to join the growing gang of US goody getters then you know what to tap – www.americangroceriesbelgium.be



We have some special events coming up just around the corner that we don't want you to miss! More details and sign up via the [Events section](#) of the website!

- Try a tippale at the **outdoor wine tasting** at De Wit Wines in Overijse on May 29 & 30 - no registration required - and its free entry!

- Commemorate at the **AOMDA annual Memorial Day Ceremony** on May 31 - its virtual this year so join in (see below for more details)!
 - Learn about **Mindfulness in Art** at the Intro to Neurographic Art on 2 dates: June 1 & 17
 - Enjoy a **cocktail & VIP Tour** of a historical building in the Sablon on June 12
 - Find out more about the discovery of a **Lost City** on June 17
 - Attend the combined **EGA and Membership Meeting** at the end of June for all the latest updates ahead of summer vacations (date to come out soon)
-



Besides the cool events mentioned above, don't forget to regularly check out the [Events calendar](#) so you don't miss out on any of the **great new stuff spicing up our agenda - there will be more things popping in the calendar for June** but in the meantime...

This month why not:

- dust off those walking shoes and join us for a gab session at **Walk and Talk** or join one of the BWC hosted **Chateaux** walks
- explore the Hex Garden Expo
- chime in at **Chit Chat and More**
- discuss and debate interesting books at our book club, **It's a Hardback Life**
- tempt your taste buds with some **Rose or Bethlehem wines**
- learn how to play bridge or do yoga
- join us for a terrace lunch - first one this season is on June 2nd - book soon to secure your place!



Extraordinary General Assembly: coming soon in June!

According to our statutes, an **Extraordinary General Assembly** (EGA) must be held before the end of June. We'll let you know via our website Events section when the exact date is set, so make sure to check.

Note that besides the required vote on the financial info/budget, we're also using the EGA to serve as a member meeting - so get ready for some Club updates, info about nominations for the September Annual General Meeting (AGM) for new Board members and other news fit to share!

We're looking forward to seeing you!

Hearts for HOPE



Hearts for HOPE have done an amazing job during this pandemic; over **250 hearts already delivered** to UZ Leuven Hospital between April 2020 and this April 2021! (CLAP, CLAP, CLAP!) **WELL DONE** to our determined and generous cutters, sewers, stuffers, baggers and donors! Please keep it up!

Our HOPE team is also preparing to give out **two 500 Euro grants** to deserving charities in our community in June. If **YOU** would like to be part of this terrific team and get more involved with the philanthropic arm of our club, contact us via <http://HOPE@AWCB.org>.





Since 1923, Americans and Belgians have gathered on Memorial Day to honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice for liberty during World Wars I and II. COVID-19 didn't stop the remembrance last year and neither will it again: Instead of gathering this year at the three military and other cemeteries and monuments in Belgium, you are invited on **Monday, May 31 at 8:00 PM Brussels time to be part of the ceremony** as it unfolds and to lay virtual flowers to honor all who died.

Learn more on the website of the [American Overseas Memorial Day Association in Belgium](#) (AOMDA).

The AOMDA's Foundation also accepts donations, which help to support Memorial Day ceremonies in Belgium, as well as other activities to commemorate the fallen. The club has made a generous donation this year in lieu of the wreaths we usually donate. You can also donate via [its website](#) or via the [Club](#). Thank you for your support!



Shout it out, shout it loud! Who doesn't love to communicate and share info with one another? We're happy to announce that we've got a nifty new means to do it: check out our new **Communication section on the AWCB website**, <https://www.awcb.org/Communication>.

You'll find a **community bulletin board** just waiting for your questions and advice, as well as an archive of this very newsletter and our blog page. Have a look, leave a tip and make sure you make this a great way to exchange info between us!



Remember that you are not only a marvellous member of the AWCB group, but also of FAWCO! **All AWCB members are automatically members of FAWCO** - the Federation of Women's Clubs Overseas - which is a United Nations affiliated NGO!

They have a very broad set of offerings, activities and advantages. Consequently, we are very pleased to announce that we we have a new volunteer for FAWCO who will help Heather Bloemperk and Jan Allen keep on top of FAWCO happenings to ensure that you

are all kept informed of entertaining events and are able to take full advantage of their benefits! With all that said, let's give a warm welcome to our new volunteer, who is also a new Club member: Michelle van der Straaten.

Going forward we'll be adding awesome activities in the newsletter and calendar for you. In the meantime - please check that you are registered on the FAWCO website, so you can fully explore the exciting elements they have to offer there: <https://www.fawco.org/registration>. This will enable you to access the full calendar of events and all areas of the site.

[Heads-up on filing with FAWCO: FYI, when registering and where it asks for "Membership Status", say you are a member of a FAWCO Club. Select ours from the dropdown menu.]

Similarly, AWCB members are welcome to join the FAWCO Members Private Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/fawco>.

For more information about FAWCO, contact our dedicated FAWCO representatives [Heather Bloemperk and Michelle van der Straaten](#) or via the website fawco.org.



Hear ye, hear ye: spread the word about 21 for 21 membership offer!

We're delighted to confirm that we are continuing with our **"21 for 21" membership offer!** And are even more delighted to announce that we've welcomed 30+ new members since the offer was announced: we are thrilled to have you in our Club

community! (And of course thanks to our "veteran" members for keeping with us!)

We'd love it if you can keep on sharing news about our membership offer with your friends and acquaintances so we can welcome even more amazing women to join us. Encourage them to find out more via awcb.org/register. In addition, if you think of a business who might like to be a sponsor for the club, please let us know and we will reach out to them.

Once again, we are really excited about building the Club's new future all together, so thanks for being part of it. [Let us know](#) if you have any questions or would like any further information!



Call for volunteers: Club Investment Committee

Are you financial savvy? Have good insight on investments? Are you interested in helping **secure the financial future of the Club?**

If so, we'd love to have you on board the **Club Investment Committee** to assist the Board in preparing the way forward for the Club's asset managements. With the sale of the house, there is a substantial amount of funds in our savings account. We plan to keep the funds fairly liquid through end of this year/start of next year so that there is ample time to explore as many options for the future as possible. (After the summer break, we also plan to kick off a Moving Forward committee so this insight will be extremely relevant.)

Therefore, in order to explore the best options to both ensure that the Club is financially healthy for the years to come, as well as to assist us to make the best choices in terms of our current and future operations, we are looking for **2-3 members with financial and/or investment experience to get involved with us** on this very important mission. If you fit this profile and are interested to join us, [let us know](#). Please include a little bit about your financial experience and what you could bring to the Committee.

Thanks in advance and we look forward to hearing from you!

Thank you as always for your involvement!

Have something to include in the newsletter? We love your news so just **e-mail us** with the details.
Ditto goes for your **events**! Thank you for your input!



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