

THE WOMAN'S CLUB OF LARCHMONT

Communittees

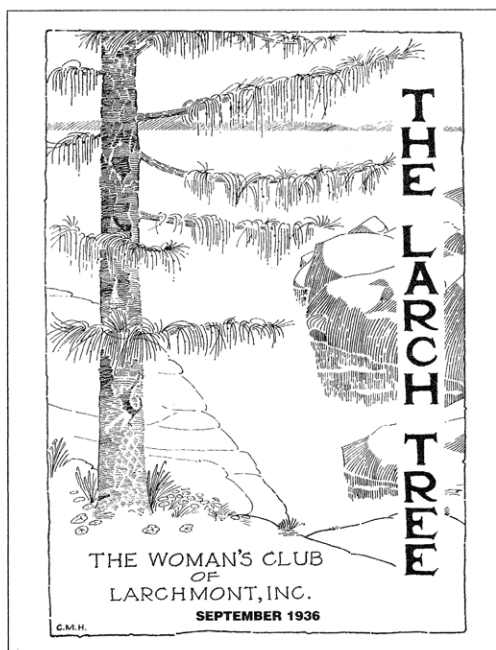


The Larch Tree

Beginnings

After the Woman's Club was founded in 1925, for the next 11 years it grew by leaps and bounds. The Club's schedule was filled with meetings and events from September to May.

By 1936 the Club needed to replace the bulletins, postal information, and numerous



Department notices being sent out to members monthly. Thus the Executive Board authorized the publication of a new magazine to be called *The Larch Tree*. This publication would contain not only all the Club and Department activities, but also include local, civic, and social news as well. The first cover depicted a larch tree near a rocky shoreline

For the next 7 years, *The Larch Tree* grew in size to 38 pages! But during the war years, a paper shortage forced a reduction to 12 pages, and the topics then became very serious and war-related. On a lighter note, there is a copy of *The Larch Tree* in the cornerstone of the Larchmont Post Office built in 1938.

In the following years, there were articles written by members and invited authors. There were biographies highlighting some of the members. There were some favorite recipes, historical essays, poetry, as well as all the Club's usual activities.

From 2000

By the turn of the century (2000, that is), *The Larch Tree* had become a four-page black and white document published 4 times a year and designed and printed by an outside vendor. There were occasional monthly issues as well as an occasional extra page centrally inserted. This format meant little room for the colorful articles and barely enough room for the important information as well as the printing and mailing costs that were incurred.

In early issues I found information on departments with which we are all familiar: Art, Drama, Music. But in addition were articles for other departments no longer active: Bridge, International Relations.

Frequently, there were articles highlighting individual members. In January 2001 one member described her book-collecting husband,

their overcrowded house (with his books), and their vacations spent searching for old books in stores and tag sales. In April 2001 there appeared a full page article on our own Eileen Mason of LMC-TV highlighting her history and accomplishments.

In addition there were many general interest or public service articles or articles on a period or place in history. In April 2002 there appeared an article called "Clipping: an inherited trait." The author described her drawers full of coupons, recipes, and other useful information. She called it an inherited trait because the whole family participated—husband and all the daughters—in a house full of notebooks and scrapbooks. For public interest, a full page article appeared describing Islam and the Taliban.

An interesting article was reprinted on Emergency Procedures, written by our own Dorothy Rainier.

10 Things to Remember in an Emergency

During a recent Woman's Club meeting—when a member had a mishap and 911 was called—everyone was impressed with and appreciative of the Rescue Squad. I missed the meeting but was called upon to write about the steps to take in case of an emergency. As you know, I am a Registered Nurse and work part-time at a local hospital.

I called and met with Michael Liverzoni, Ambulance District Administrator for the Town of Mamaroneck, and we collaborated on this list. Most of the suggestions are his.

- ** Ask the person if he or she is all right to determine consciousness or if the person is choking.
- ** Call 911.
- ** Stay on the line until EMS/PP (Emergency Medical Service/Police Department) or the call-taker hangs up. Then keep the line open.
- ** Try not to move the patient.
- ** Stay with the patient.
- ** Gather medications, keys to the patient's pockets or handbag, clothing, and MD's phone numbers.
- ** If available, have someone meet the ambulance at the curb—with house or building door unlocked.
- ** Do not give food or drink to the patient.
- ** Keep the patient warm.
- ** If the patient's condition changes, call 911.

NOTE: It would be a good idea to learn the Heimlich Maneuver and/or to take CPR training.

I am going to keep this list near my phone.

Many thanks to Michael Liverzoni and the members of the Rescue Squad.

Dorothy Rainier
The Larch Tree, Feb/Mar 2002

Going Online

Beginning in September 2019 the first three issues were produced as before using Twin Productions layout, editing, printing, and the Post Office snail mail distribution. At the Executive Board meeting of February 14, 2020, a test copy of *The Larch Tree* was produced and passed to everyone present. The approval to proceed was voted on and approved. A second test issue was produced and sent by email to all members to test out the accuracy of the delivery system and to test the accuracy of the email addresses. This was done using the Google Gmail system. The final copy of the new *Larch Tree* was sent to all members on March 15, 2020. Much positive feedback was received. Below is the first page of our new format.



The Larch Tree

Vol. 84, No. 4
April/May/June 2020

THE WOMAN'S CLUB OF LARCHMONT, INC.

Calendar of Events

Note:
LAC—Larchmont Avenue Church
MTC—Mamaroneck Town Center
Ground Floor, Conference Room C

APRIL 2020

Wednesday, April 8
9:15 am Executive Board (MTC)

Thursday, April 16
10:30 am Book Discussion

Friday, April 17
CLUB DAY
1:00 pm Annual Meeting and Elections
1:30 pm Program

Thursday, April 23
11:45 am Lunch at Harvest on Hudson
2:00 pm Art Tour
"Gallery of Art Building"

Thursday, April 23
10:30 am Federation Spring Conference
"Woman of the Year"
Social Meeting, Luncheon
White Plains Woman's Club

MAY 2020

Friday, May 8
10:30 am Education Trip to Jay Heritage Center, Rye, NY

Friday, May 15
11:30 am Annual Installation and Notebook Passing Luncheon
Orienta Beach Club

Thursday, May 21
10:30 am Book Discussion

JUNE 2020

Friday, June 5
10:30 am Federation Board of Directors Meeting with Light Lunch
Scarsdale Woman's Club

Friday, June 12
9:15 am Executive Board Meeting (MTC)
12:00 pm Past Presidents of Westchester Women's Club Luncheon
Westchester Hill Golf Club, White Plains, NY

Thursday, June 18
10:30 am Book Discussion

CLUB DAY - ANNUAL ELECTIONS

Friday, April 17, 2020
1:00 pm Meeting, 1:30 pm Program

The Changing Face of Our Community

The Public Affairs Department will present a forum to learn first-hand how our representatives are working for the betterment of our community as they address current changes and challenges.



We are very honored to welcome Catherine Parker as our speaker. Catherine, currently is a member of the Westchester County Board of Legislators and represents our district, the 7th Legislative District. Catherine has been re-elected twice and was recently the majority leader of the County Board of Legislators.

Catherine has been a strong environmental advocate and has enacted laws prohibiting gun shows in Westchester County. She is a small business owner, mom, activist, and is currently campaigning to succeed Nita Lowey in the 17th Congressional District.

Her political history includes Rye Chamber of Commerce, League of Women Voters, Westchester Advisory Group, Playland Advisory Group, and Rye City Councilwoman.

A question and answer session will follow her presentation. A Tea Table will follow the program. Donations and volunteers appreciated.

Janet Demasi, Public Affairs Chair

COMING EVENTS – Save the dates

Philanthropic Luncheon, POSTPONED

Spelling Bee, Larchmont Temple, postponed

Thursday, April 23 Art Tour (see page 3)

11:45 am Lunch, Harvest-on-the-Hudson

Friday, May 8 Education Department trip (see page 2)

Jay Heritage Center, Rye, NY, 10:30 am

A Bit of Technical Information

Although some of the first creative efforts attempted to use Microsoft Word, it soon became clear that Microsoft Publisher was easier to use, more flexible, and allowed me to alter the text and the photos as I desired. There were a variety of fonts that could be used, photographs could be positioned and repositioned and even cropped, text could be highlighted, and best of all we had color. And finally we were not limited to the four pages previously printed. Flyers for upcoming events could be copied in their entirety as presented by the representative director.

The first issue contained five pages of Club information and sent out with email, using the Google email distribution (they allow up to 500

per day). Copies were printed at a local copier and mailed the old fashioned way to those members without email. Labels used were printed in house using Avery label format.

Over the years additional copies were mailed to those who requested them for various reasons. Much positive feedback was received.

Currently the names and addresses are maintained in MS Excel files. They are updated regularly with information from the Membership Chair. Name and address labels and return address labels are computer printed using Avery Label pages. Currently two copies are sent to each member: PDF and JPEG formats.

All in all, going online was a big success both in our finances and for our information.

The Changing Face of Publicity

The acceptance of email as an easy communication tool, the improved ability to search for information on the internet, the ease of taking and sharing photos due to cameras on smartphones, and the rise of online local news sources, all transpired in the first 25 years of the Twentieth Century and changed the process as to how the Club's publicity was handled.

The annual Press and Publicity Report for 2001-2002 begins "The job of this committee is to promote the Woman's Club, through coverage in the press, as a hard-working, worthwhile, philanthropic organization. One also has to remember that the newspaper's job is to print 'new.' "That means our stories have to be interesting and the events covered worthy of publication. We are delighted to report that we had a good year."

The computer and fax machine were mentioned as necessities for the job as the fax machine allowed one to send the story to all papers without having to leave the house. Prior to this was a description of handling things by hand - the photos, stories, making many copies, mailing or delivering by hand. Dealing with photos was particularly addressed. A digital camera, which neither co-chair Judy Kenny nor Lee Korchin owned, was cited for the ability to send pictures over the internet as some papers did not allow for photocopies of photos, which in the end would have to be mailed. Today fax machines are hardly used, and we have smartphones with cameras allowing us to take a picture, and easily crop, adjust and attach to an email. Posting a photo

online is part of the routine today via Facebook, on our own website, or on a local news/event website such as The Patch or NextDoor.

Club Day & Department Day programs, the installation of new officers, the Book & Author event, and the spring philanthropic fundraiser were regularly publicized. Over time, this has changed. Department Days have diminished. Club Day programs recently have not been publicized due to no member volunteering. Major public events such as the Book & Author Luncheon and the Philanthropic Luncheon continue to be publicized. In more recent years publicity to inform the community about the Club's Community Food Drives has also been publicized before and after the events.

So let us journey through the years and see what were some of the highlights.

An article in *The Sound & Town Report*, December 7, 2001, on Laura Jane Peterson, who was about to celebrate her 98th birthday, had created over 60 stuffed cloth teddy bears for children as part of the Woman's Club contribution of 635 various Christmas gifts given to the New Rochelle Services Center of the Rockland Psychiatric Center. A short Calendar piece in *The Larchmont Ledger* mentions the Club's Annual Spring Garden Party, the fund-raising event which became known later as a philanthropic luncheon.

Other publications where events and articles appeared were *The Journal News*, their weekly publication *The Times*, and *Soundview News*.

An article about the presentation of a holly tree to the park, at the corner of Palmer Ave. and Weaver St., was mentioned in numerous publications. The tree was to be the centerpiece of a new planting area in the park and a permanent plaque was placed at the base to designate the Club as donor. At the ceremony was Club President Helen Bonardi, with Valerie Moore O’Keeffe, Town Supervisor, along with Patricia O’Donnell, Chair of the Town’s Beautification Committee and Drayton Gerety, liaison between the Town and the Club. Woman’s Club board members were also present.

Lee Korchin writes in the report from 2006-2007 that she had invited two Larchmont reporters, Mimi Koren representing *The Sound & Town Report*, and Judy Silberstein, the publisher of the online *The Larchmont Gazette*, to the Book & Author event. Ms. Koren interviewed the authors and followed up with an article and pictures in the December 15, 2006, issue.

In the 2007-2008 annual publicity report some sources still wanted a copy by fax and others wanted it via email. A couple of places where releases were sent included *The Pennysaver* (Tri-State Media), *The Larchmont Gazette*, and LMC-TV Community News. But by 2016 these sources were no longer mentioned. *The Larchmont Gazette* closed in 2010. *The Pennysaver* went out of business in 2015.

The media outlets used in 2009 were 4 newspapers, two online sites and LMC-TV. Added to the previous list were *Sound Shore Express* (*Journal News*) and the online site *Get-In-Loop*, which eventually became *The Loop*.

Peggy Rao, writing the Publicity Report of 2009-2010 offered this advice as to how to

write and when to send publicity. “Information should be e-mailed two to three weeks in advance of either the desirable issue date or our RSVP date. It pays to approximate the publication’s writing style in doing the press releases, but it is not necessary. The easier it is for the paper to just drop in our text, the greater the chance that the newspaper will use it. Sending a jpeg photo increases the chance of inclusion and of getting extra space.” At some point *Sound Shore Rising* replaced *Soundview News*. Peggy suggests that the list of media sources be updated every year.

One of the earliest pieces on food donations by Club members was in *The Sound and Town Report*, December 17, 2010 issue. The Orienta Beach Club in Mamaroneck was the drop point. Sondra Levy of the Larchmont-Mamaroneck Hunger Task Force, accepted the donations as Pat O’Donnell, director of philanthropy, assisted. There were 600 local families, more than 1,000 people, who depended on the pantry.

The first printout in the publicity notebooks of publicity from a website, was the website *Larchmont-Mamaroneck Patch*. The program on March 4, 2011, consisted of two presenters, Kiran Chetry, an award-winning broadcast journalist at CNN, and Dr. Robert Shaps, Superintendent of Mamaroneck School District. That was followed by a printout from the Larchmont Dish website on April 4, 2011, with the annual fundraising luncheon event, co-chaired by Roberta Ronan and Valerie O’Keeffe, Town Supervisor.

Some publicity tips were included in the annual publicity report. Mention was made that for publicity to be included in the newspapers, non-member attendance to Club events must be permitted. And material submitted to the

newspapers should be different from that printed in *The Larch Tree*; however, the picture may be the same, if no other is available. As publicity moved online, the online copy involved modifications to the print copy, mostly due to the format of the online website.

In 2013, Ingela Shapiro wrote that including a photo increased the chance of inclusion in the print media. Of course, as time goes on, posting online allows full opportunity to get the publicity out there. And a photo, while not necessary, will probably attract attention. By 2013, press releases were being emailed. In 2014, there was a posting on the Larchmont Newswire, a Facebook group.

In 2016, emails were sent to 3 print sources: *Larchmont Ledger*, *Mamaroneck Review* and *SoundView Rising*. Information was posted to the Larchmont-Mamaroneck Patch, with free posting to New Rochelle, Rye and Bronxville-Eastchester. In later years there would be a fee for broader coverage. Other online sites were The Loop, Larchmont Dish, and the Mamaroneck-Larchmont Daily Voice. The following year the Dish and Daily Voice were dropped and LoHud online (Journal News) was added.

Besides Club Day programs, a couple of articles appeared in 2016 - 2017 about the Philanthropy Committee making donations to the Town of Mamaroneck Community Service and to the 16 recipients benefiting from the Philanthropic Luncheon. The following year, in addition to an article about the Philanthropy Committee donations, an article appeared about members participating in the Arts Festival held in the fall of 2017.

In March of 2020 all in-person programs ceased due to COVID-19. Programs were to be

available using Zoom, the video conferencing platform. In order for the public to join, a Gmail email account was set up and monitored by the president. The Zoom link would be sent out via email to those who requested it. Some programs were recorded and posted to YouTube.

Theresa Fanelli began the Club's Facebook page in 2018 and continues to post Club events. In addition to continual publicity on Club Day programs, the Book and Author luncheon, and the Philanthropic luncheon, articles about upcoming community food drives were posted on Facebook, The Patch, NextDoor, and sent to *The Larchmont Ledger*. Occasional follow-up food drive articles were also posted. Shared with the community was the amount and types of donations collected for the Hope Food Pantry in New Rochelle.

In 2022-2023 the publication *Larchmont Living* was added. Short event entries and post event photos were published. As for print publications, only *The Larchmont Ledger* was still being used. At the end of this year no one stepped up to cover publicity. The current publicity person, June Hesler, then agreed to publicize the Book & Author and Philanthropic Luncheons as these were events attended by non-members. The person assisting with publicizing the food drive events no longer continued. As this is an important community event, June returned to publicizing the upcoming drives and also follow-up food drive articles.

In 2025, online is where the publicity lives except for two print publications, the monthly *Larchmont Living* and the weekly *Larchmont Ledger*. The website continues to provide the Club's calendar with listings of events and the

posting of pictures of Club Days and activities including the luncheons and food drives.

Our Website

In 2010 small businesses and informal organizations were flocking to the Internet with newly created websites. We knew a website could show our long authenticity and reach prospective new members. But how to make one? Commercial designers' fees were prohibitive and none of our members had digital design talents. Fortunately a free do-it-yourself company called Homestead, owned indirectly by Google, came to the rescue with a choice of design templates. We could fill in all our information, even post photographs, and have everything hosted for a modest fee on their digital system. Peggy Rao, member and professional copywriter, drafted an initial text and cleared it with longtime club leader Celia Dentzer. Another officer Anne-Mieke Smeets had scores of photos to colorfully populate the text. The big moment came in March of 2010, when the Club's website, www.WomansClubofLarchmont.org, was launched.

Peggy mentioned in the Annual Publicity Report that tech support is available "from a knowledgeable and patient team."

As time went on, members' relatives began to refine the site: two designers came to the rescue repeatedly—Willem DeVries, still in college, and David Edelstein in Nova Scotia. The template's calendar didn't allow adequate space for information for our events, so the Club created its own expandable format that doesn't require digital skills. In 2013, DeVries changed the overall design by switching to the drag-and-drop templates provided by the DIY host Wix, headquartered in Tel Aviv. Peggy Rao maintained the Club's website updating the calendar, officers, and selecting photos to post from the Club Day programs and special events, such as officer installation, Book and Author, and the Philanthropic Luncheons. Around 2021, June Hesler assisted with updating the calendar and in 2023 began to post the photos to the website including the community food drives.

With AI waiting at the door, big changes are ahead.

Charity and Philanthropy

Early History

Charity and philanthropy have been prime objectives of the WCL since the organization's inception in 1925 for the "Betterment of the Community." An example of early involvement was the adoption and maintenance of a cottage housing 20 boys at Children's Village in Dobbs Ferry in the 1926-27 club year. In 1932 the Club contributed \$1,000 in continued support of Children's Village and additionally adopted a local family in great need. This project meant paying a regular weekly grant to the family until it was more financially sound.

Another 1932 enterprise was the establishment of the popular Women's Exchange where food and crafts were sold bringing needed income to as many as 30 families. During the depression and war years other examples included an Unemployment Relief Committee, selling of war stamps and bonds locally, a Special Defense Committee which made cakes and brought gifts to the recreation center at Fort Slocum, and collecting furniture for the rec room at Camp Shanks. Members collected (or purchased) 410 dolls for which doll clothing was sewn for distribution to the NR Hospital and to the underprivileged—all this was accomplished despite the war regulations against use of cars for such endeavors resulting in a great deal of walking between home and buses.

All of the early history and activities of the Woman's Club are well documented in *The*

Woman's Club of Larchmont, Inc: A History: 1925-2000.

Later Years

In a comparison of recipients of philanthropic allocations in 1951 and today (2025) one sees a similarity in the community commitment to issues related to youth, education, health. Special gifts totaling \$2,908 were given towards restoration of Independence Hall at WCC and the LM Exchange Student Program. It was also noted that the many hours of service donated by our members were probably worth as much, if not more, than the financial gifts. Home Sewing groups, Social Service, Diversional therapy, the Choral and our newly formed Activators worked many hours to help hospital patients. The Men's Club was so impressed they awarded a plaque "In recognition of Outstanding Community Service, This Scroll is Awarded to the Woman's Club of Larchmont." Giving in 2005 increased to \$3,800 and by 2021 the Club had added as many as 18 other organizations, increasing the donations to \$12,000. Fundraising luncheons now included bridge, a fashion show, raffles, and silent auctions.

Our members were busy: Mary Lee Berridge along with Maria Massimi talked with the manager of Lord and Taylor resulting in a Charity Day fundraiser. Sue Ellen Commender visited most of the recipients of WCL funds and spearheaded more hands-on activities such as outfitting a

family of 6 and collecting toiletries for My Sister's Place. Additional money was raised by wrapping books at Barnes and Noble under Therese Boyd's direction.

The 2024 Philanthropic Allocation, which practically doubled to \$21,903 and reflected the same concerns with new issues added (such as hunger, housing, the environment, counseling) coupled with donations to many more organizations that had already been established to address community needs. Over the years these organizations have included: Children's Village, Jennie Clarkson School, Grasslands Hospital, Girl Scouts, Campfire Girls, Community Chest, County Home, NR Hospital, LM Student Aid, Westchester Children's Assn, American Red Cross, 9th District Scholarship Fund, WCC, LM Exchange Student Program.

Additional organizations added later were: Cancer Support Team, Carver Center, Community Resource Center, Friends of the Counselling Center, Furniture Sharehouse, HOPE Community Services, Hunger Task Force, Larchmont Friends of the Family, Larchmont Library, LMC-Media, Mamaroneck Library, My Sister's Place, Save the Sound, Sheldrake Environmental Center, SHORE/ICARE, Stem Alliance, Fuller Center, TOM Community Services, Visions,

VAC Ambulance Corps, Washingtonville Housing Alliance, Westchester Federation of Women's Clubs Scholarships.

Recent Changes

Some changes over time have been only superficial such as changes in names for the philanthropic activities that have included Public Welfare Department to Ways and Means to 1942's Philanthropic Committee/Department. An important change came in 2011 and 2012 when the allocation of monies raised in the Spring Luncheon (major fundraiser) is to be the responsibility of a new committee, the Philanthropic Allocation Committee, consisting of the President, Treasurer, and other members of the Executive Board.

Concerning philanthropy in the last 5 years (since 2020), we have expanded our geographic territory somewhat to include more of the Sound Shore (i.e. Port Chester). Another innovation was the creation of a file for each of the 17 major supported charities that includes their mission statements, financial info, and current leadership. In 2017-18 Sheelah Mohan suggested we have a Raffle Basket at each of the monthly club meetings with the proceeds to go to philanthropy. In



2022 the motion was passed that each month the Board of the Woman's Club would decide what philanthropy would receive the proceeds. In practice the Head of Philanthropy with the committee has drawn up a list of recipients to consider, but crises such as floods, invasions, special needs are also suggested by other board members.

Covid necessitated the designation of Saturday food donation days if we were to continue to help HOPE Food Pantry. WCL started Community Day donations resulting in an increased number of items and dollar contributions (which allows HOPE to purchase necessary non-donated items). When in-person meetings resumed in 2022 not only did WCL continue with three Saturday Food Donation Days, but members of the Philanthropy Committee parked one hour earlier on meeting days to receive donations. Much more was collected than before Covid as the new system allowed several WCL members to bring many bags of food and diapers in their cars to HOPE.

Covid did not stop WCL members from Fundraising. In 2021, the Silent Auction was held outside in the rotunda of Constitution Park. In 2022 a number of Mamaroneck apartments were flooded causing victims to lose many possessions. WCL worked with Furniture Sharehouse in collecting and purchasing items for the victims completely filling 7 large bins, filled with kitchen, bath, and decorative items as well as small appliances.

In March of 2023 Philanthropy hosted a Community Events Day. Jirandy Martinez of CRC and Theresa Colyar of Washingtonville Alliance spoke about housing and homeless issues

of concern currently in Mamaroneck. Not only were the speakers thought-provoking (as indicated by questions and conversation afterwards), but also the well-attended event was made special by the punch and savories served.

Additional service opportunities were developed in 2025. WCL worked with the CRC Workforce division to provide gift cards for the Day Laborers who "shape up" and use their facilities. The 2025 Community Event Day featured Rev. Elizabeth Friend-Ennis of the Interfaith Prison Project at Bedford Women's Prison. In response to her riveting information WCL members collected, organized, and delivered Release Bags filled with suggested items that the women will need in the days after they leave prison.

The Future

Helen Bonardi, the newly installed president in 2000-2002, was asked by the authors of *A History: 1925-2000* about the Club's direction in the new millennium. She replied that member will continue to give their enthusiastic help to many fields of caring in our community. This commitment reverberates to this day. In 2025, WCL continues to inform our members of contemporary issues challenging our local and global communities at the same time continuing to develop personal relationships of caring and support among our members while also trying to help others through our fundraising activities and personal outreach and by adopting projects often suggested and largely implemented by the Philanthropic Committee.

Programs

During the past 25 years, the Woman's Club has offered over 150 programs. The topics are as varied as the interest of the Club members. In 2000, we worried about Y2K and in 2025, we learned about AI. Technology changes rapidly and members of the Club have been just as interested in keeping their knowledge current. But besides technology, programs have been offered in the Arts, Music, Health, Current Events near home and abroad, the Environment and many more areas of interest. It is important to recognize that the Woman's Club does not merely sit on the successes and interests of the past century, but it remains an active community force looking towards the future in philanthropy, service and fellowship. Often the topics of Club meeting impel members to adopt additional philanthropic organizations as recipients of our fund raising. Moreover, we serve as a place of fellowship with many members who have retired from their respective professions having lived in Larchmont for decades. This may result in more leisure time to explore areas that there was not enough time to explore before or to acquire new areas of interest using skills they have developed living and working in the greater Larchmont community.

Not a techie? The Woman's Club has offered wonderfully diverse programs in the

Arts. Perhaps, you have enjoyed the theatrical caricatures of Hirschfeld sketches of Broadway theatre actors and actresses often published in the NY Times. Or maybe you are interested in impressionism and modernism. Lectures on Mary Cassatt and Suzanne Valadon, who painted with the best of the impressionism male artists, are currently generating renewed interests and excitement in the 21st century. Women have always played an important role in art. Matisse and Modigliani's "muses" were women whose faces as well as other more personal body parts inspired these artists. Moreover, we have in our own backyards, The Hudson River museum, the Bruce Museum in Greenwich and the Woman's Club even heard a lecturer from a world renown animal photographer from the Bronx Zoo! We traveled to Africa to learn about African Arts. And we have even enjoyed lectures of Treasures in Your Attic. Who knows, you may have stored a classic painting which the art world is waiting to discover?

The Woman's Club has been interested in health matters, relating to Woman's Heart Health, Preventing Memory Loss and Dementia, and Hearing loss with hearing screenings offered for those who wanted one. We even had a workshop in Fall Safe, a program designed for those who may trip, fall more gracefully, and better

still, without serious bodily injury. We enjoy Club Day programs on History. We have heard from the Larchmont Historical Society on several occasions these past 25 years, as well as a speaker on St. Paul's Church in Mount Vernon and the importance it played during the Revolution. We even went traveling to South Africa with Hilary Clinton. While apolitical, we have had a lecture on a bird's eye view of the Democratic convention. We've heard regularly from our local officials – the Town of Mamaroneck Supervisor and the Mayors of Larchmont and Mamaroneck. We've also had travel programs on Ireland, Costa Rica and Vietnam. And we learned from international expert Thomas Kent, how the Ukraine war has impacted everything. While we are not traveling to the Ukraine, Tom and our own Sophie Kent are, and there, he shares his knowledge on Russian propaganda. It was a true honor to host him. At home, here on the Sound Shores, we heard about the concerns about the open waters and its condition. Save the Sound, a nationally recognized program in our own Larchmont, works to test, clean up, and monitor this precious resource we all enjoy for sailing, swimming, and the incredible vistas. Good news! The Sound is getting healthier!

And we enjoy a good song. Music lectures on Scott Joplin, Irving Berlin, Richard Rodgers, Porgy and Bess, and other American composers help us listen to their music with more sophisticated ears. We visited the Tennessee Waltz and songs from The Great American Songbook collection by the Smithsonian. And of course, we heard about the Beatles and their influence by classical music. Who would have known! The sensational seventies discussed disco and Beatlemania. And representatives played guitar and mandolin rhythms. We even learned about Irish step dancing and gave it a try. And we loved the live performances from Bonnie Rapp who regaled us at Club Days with Irish songs and also music of springtime. Of course we sang along! And Bonnie was featured at our Centennial Gala, entertaining us with songs across the decades since 2020, and led us in a rousing tune written by our own Dorothy Rainier.

See somethings that piques your interest? Have a suggestion for a program in the future? Share your ideas with the First Vice-Presidents of the Club who are charged with scheduling programs for Club Days. Here's to the next 25 years, and here's to more amazing programs!

The Junior Section

In the 1970s one had to be asked, nominated, and voted upon in order to join the Junior Section of the Woman's Club of Larchmont. It was a delight and even an honor to be asked. Most of the women were very active and with small children so the evening meetings were thus more manageable. After a day spent playing Candyland, managing to complete a white wash, and refereeing sibling conflicts, one could look forward to hearing an interesting speaker, socializing with adults, and helping the community through service projects.

The original Junior Section members who formed the group in 1926 were typically high school daughters who had joined their mothers in various activities of WCL. Eventually they formed their own group with their own officers. Membership was originally limited to those whose mother was a member of the 'Senior Section' and one had to be 16. By the 60s and 70s membership was open to those who "had reached 18 but not their 40th birthday on June 1st." By this time juniors were now young women, most married with college degrees and work experience, and who had elected to be at home when children arrived. A proposer of a member needed two other members to sign the prospective member's application. A challenge was soon raised about the tradition of using the name of the husband instead of her given name.

Why We Joined

"It was a group of individuals who were friendly and welcoming." "It was a compatible, social organization with no great responsibility. We could trade information, find support . . ." "... the evening provided a chance to get out, help others through their philanthropic efforts while enjoying adult company." These were the reasons given by Marcia Dolan, Tish Cox, Judy Kulzer and Carolyn Gallaher — all previous members of the Junior Section—who got together for coffee and brain storming in the summer of 2023.

Some of the events most remembered were a cooking demonstration by Harry's Sauteuse, and a program by Philip Severin whom the Larchmont Historical Society said was known as "Mr. Larchmont," who "played an integral role as a realtor, developer, planner." He was also an excellent raconteur of the history of Larchmont. Not to be forgotten was Judy Levine's lively auctions of donated material, the Christmas Party, and the Mother-Daughter dinner at the end of the year. The major fundraising project to fund a MHS scholarship was a Tag Sale. When it was held at her house, Tish Cox remembered people came early and were really quite aggressive in wanting her to "open up." One member remembered when her husband accidentally had put his good sports coat holding his paycheck in among the

donations! Apparently he was quite philosophical about the loss. Another member commented wryly that her kids brought back all the toys she had donated. With all the challenges, the Jr Section's scholarship helped a needy high school student meet the challenge of college tuition.

Philanthropy was important to the Juniors. Children's Village was delighted when they adopted to support a cottage and another very successful meeting was devoted to making posters for them. Such activities began to attract more members who saw they could help others and that good baby-sitting was being provided.

Changes Over Time

Members were listed by Department in WCL Yearbooks. In 1979-80 Yearbook, the members of the Junior Section and the Evening Section were still listed by their husband's names. For example, Mrs. Allen Pardo (Marilyn), but the Club Directory listed the members that met during the day by their given names: for example, Abbott, Christine (Mrs. Gregory M.). Interestingly enough, when the same people were cited by their role in committees, the ID by husband's name was the rule. Gradually, women were listed throughout the Yearbook by their own given names as is done today.

Within the Junior Section, the annual and very popular Mother-Daughter dinner became the Mother-Child dinner, which pleased those with little boys who in their shirts and ties acted as young gentlemen.

Juniors were no longer expected to serve at the Annual Luncheon; this was phased out in the 1970s.

Membership numbers would fluctuate but the numbers increased to a dynamic 40 in 1979 (still not near the numbers of the 1950s).

Meetings had been held in the Orienta Club rooms at 8 pm on the first Monday of the month from October to May. When WCL moved to the VFW Post on BPR in September 1984 so did the Junior Section.

Notes and Disbanding

In the 1980s, club membership was down in all departments. In 1985-86 Junior Section membership totaled 32. By 1989-90 the number was 23. Despite a full program listed in the 1991-92 Yearbook which included a Halloween Dance, Interior Decorating speaker, a psychic reading, bowling, and the Annual Philanthropic Dinner, the membership was down to 10. This will be the last yearbook listing for the Juniors.

In 1992 the Junior Section disbanded. In 1994-5, of the 10 remaining juniors, only 4 had selected to retain their membership in WCL.

Lucy Kerson Maloney Walsh had the many scrapbooks and items from the Junior Section of WCL that were stored in her home in Connecticut. Sadly, everything was burned to ash a few years ago when her home caught fire.

Our Members, 2000-2025



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90th Anniversary High Tea

The Woman's Club of Larchmont celebrated its 90th anniversary with a "High Tea" at the Larchmont Yacht Club on October 2, 2015. Ninety people including three husbands of members, and some local politicians, as well as several members of other Women's Clubs attended this wonderful event in roaring twenties style as suggested on the invite.

There was a long "History Table" with old photos, candle holders, platters, and great information from photo albums and scrapbooks. There was a running slide show of events with new and old photos of the Woman's Club members.

Many of the members were in period costumes, wearing boas, beautiful colorful hats, pearls, feathers, etc. The table centerpieces were fabulous, and a large variety of teas was served in the classic bone china teacups. The "High Tea" foods served were scones, jellies & jams, tea sandwiches with cucumbers, herbed butter and shrimp, smoked salmon with curry aioli or cream cheese, tuna and egg salads, sweets, cookies, etc. Everybody was offered a glass of wine or a soft drink.

The President, Anne-Mieke Smeets, welcomed everyone and delivered a welcome speech (see below), after which she toasted all with some Prosecco on the 90th anniversary.

Welcome to the 90th Anniversary Celebration of our Woman's Club of Larchmont. I would especially like to welcome all our members and their guests, the visiting presidents from other Women's Clubs, our honorary member Laura Eckley, Larchmont Public Library. I also would like to welcome local politicians from Mamaroneck and Larchmont and our Past Presidents who are here today.

It had long been a dream and desire of a number of women in Larchmont to establish a Woman's Club," this according to the minutes written on January 30, 1925. There were 12 founding members and the idea of establishing the Club was to improve the quality of life for women, children, and families in their immediate area. The Club is non-partisan, and no member shall be barred because of politics or religion!

You might enjoy the early description of what makes a perfect member according to the standards of the "twenties:"

One must be charming, refined, personable, attractive, educated, of good moral character, ideally no children, own property, and belong to other organizations! The Club was an important entity which helped to bring a lot of changes to the Larchmont-Mamaroneck communities. In the ensuing years as membership increased, the scope of work has gone beyond Larchmont to include state projects: helping children from broken homes,

assisting battered women, helping families stricken with major illnesses, aiding working parents in need of childcare and helping parents cope with the loss of a job.

In the 90 years of existence, the Club changed a lot. As members started to join the workforce, especially during the war, an evening section was established, but was abandoned after many years and incorporated in the Club as it exists today. Many great programs were offered: trips, plays, dancing lessons, gardening classes, language and art classes, lectures, fashion shows, discussion groups, music programs, making teddy bears for the Westchester Medical Center Christmas celebration, and many other programs. However, one of the main purposes of our Club was and still is Philanthropy, and we are quite successful in organizing such a purpose. Each year the proceeds of the Philanthropic Luncheon and other Fund-Raising events have been distributed to local charities and schools.

It is really fascinating to delve into the History of our Club, and to get a glimpse of it by looking at the photos, articles, etc. on the display at the "History table." In 1985 the history book "The First Sixty Years" was distributed to all members, and in 2000 a special book "The Woman's Club of Larchmont, Inc. A History: 1925 - 2000 was published and distributed.

At the 50th anniversary of our Club in 1975, President Mrs. Albert Bollengier, Jr, remarked: "Meeting the challenge of tomorrow is an ongoing concern of the Woman's Club of Larchmont. If an organization cannot meet the needs of changing circumstances, it is doomed." Although those words sound very gloomy, I have to say that celebrating our 90th anniversary today with this High Tea is a highlight and testimony that our Club is doing well by attracting enthusiastic young women as well as mature members, and I am very optimistic to see a long future ahead.

I thank all members who helped organize this wonderful event, especially Pat O'Donnell, Camille Odierna,, and Dee van Eyck with her committee. Many members were involved in the planning, and I thank you all very much for your help and a special thank you to those who loaned us some of their beautiful teacups and saucers.

*May I now toast you all with some Prosecco:
Happy 90th Anniversary to all of you!*

Enjoy the afternoon . . .

A great time was had by all. Please see photos accompanying this article.







Photos from the Centennial Tea and Gala, 2025