Almost one year ago, we celebrated 25 years of the Culinary Historians of Canada. Little did we know what the 26th year would bring! This year has seen some unique challenges for your CHC board. Like many other organizations, it has been several months since we have met face to face. We “Zoomed”, “Google Met” and emailed each other many times to create new ways to connect with our members and those interested in the fascinating world of culinary history. It has certainly been a learning curve! And, under the guidance of Ellen Pekilis, we have a fantastic strategic plan set in place.

Our events last fall and winter, which seem so long ago, were cherished gatherings: Victorian Cake Decorating with Monika Paradi and Sherry Murphy; Schmecks Appeal, the Culinary Legacy of Edna Staebler, in Kitchener, given by Rose Murray and coordinated by Lori Jamieson; Baking for the Victorian Christmas Table hosted by Sherry Murphy at Montgomery’s Inn; a launch of Lenore Newman’s book, Lost Feast: Culinary Extinction and the Future of Food for which Sylvia Lovegren collaborated with the Culinary Research Centre at the U of T; a lovely dinner held in December with most of our honorary members and executive at Le Papillion to present Julian Armstrong with her honorary membership; the ever popular Hungry for Comfort event at Fort York where CHC provided assistance to Jan Main in judging marmalade, chutney and challah bread; and, also at Fort York, a Family Day display and baked goods sale put together by Sherry Murphy and Carolyn Crawford. Our last face to face event was at Campbell House to launch CHC member John Ota’s The Kitchen *A journey through history in search of the perfect design*. It was a completely sold out event and a fantastic evening was enjoyed by all.

Then, the Covid-19 pandemic struck. Events and meetings needed to change to a digital format to continually engage our members.

Brilliantly, John Ota, along with Julia Armstrong and Sarah Hood developed our CHC You Tube channel series “Behind Every Great Cook is a Great Mother!” It was an unforgettable week watching John and Julia interview some of Canada’s prominent cooks, chefs and cookbook authors about their beginnings in the kitchen alongside their mothers. Rose Murray is featured in our most recent posting.

Sarah Hood, our newsletter editor and designer of our new core values logo, has adapted our newsletter in spectacular ways to always provide you with wonderful content. She and Jane Black have developed a new section on historic sites. I have really enjoyed reading it and look forward to visiting the sites when Covid-19 has ended.

Sarah Hood and Julia Armstrong also work on our website to keep it the valuable “go to” resource it truly is. Fiona Lucas’ bibliography of culinary history resources is there for you to draw upon.

It has also been a pleasure seeing how CHC members and CHC Facebook page members (confession, I check this page many times a day especially during Covid-19 when Mark D’Aguilar posted his meals!) post about the many ways the pandemic has influenced their time in the kitchen. Did you ever think, that bread baking and other historic cooking would have been so widely embraced in such a fashion, that grocery stores would run out of flour, yeast and other baking essentials?

We encourage you to keep sharing your creations such as those who have entered our Virtual Pie and Posy Pudding Contests. Samantha George and Jennifer Meyer (who always have fresh ideas!) have put these virtual events together. Jennifer coordinates our volunteers and would love to add you to her list.

Sylvia Lovegren who works on almost all our events with great success, is also coordinating more virtual events in the coming months. Watch our Facebook page, newsletter and website for other ways you can participate in the fun!

Sherry Murphy works tirelessly on preparing refreshments for our events. She always has stuff ready ahead of time. Have you seen the Refrigerator Cookies she has posted on our Facebook page all ready for the AGM?

Judy Chow as our membership coordinator has continually worked hard to successfully grow our membership list and has mastered Mailchimp to keep it up to date. Please encourage a friend to join and keep it growing! Kim Moulsdale has reached out by telephone to people whose membership had lapsed.

Luisa Giacometti has kept herself busy, too, with book reviews and encourages us through emails.

In closing, I wish, on your behalf, to thank all our board members for rising to this year’s challenges. I particularly wish to thank our outgoing secretary, Lori Jamieson, who among many other things, has worked tirelessly and efficiently to install our records into the archives at the University of Guelph. And, I wish to thank Ellen Pekilis, for her guidance and her delightful way in developing our strategic plan from its humble beginnings.

The many talents of all our board members help to truly inspire, appreciate and advance knowledge of Canada’s culinary history and we welcome you to join us!

***Respectfully submitted by Carolyn Crawford, President***