

HISTORIENS CULINAIRE
DU CANADA



CULINARY HISTORIANS
OF CANADA

CHC Communications Committee Report

Prepared by Co-Chairs Sarah Hood & Julia Armstrong
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The committee continued to manage digital resources, including website content and social media, produce the newsletter, and distribute the membership directory.

In the winter, we added more digitized historical cookbooks to the Resources section of the website and reorganized its presentation. Also added were two extensive culinary history bibliographies that Fiona Lucas had completed. The archival slideshows created by Fiona for last year's 25th anniversary were uploaded to the About Us section of the site. Fiona also prepared an updated index to *Culinary Chronicles* (a new and expanded guide to all 71 issues of our previous quarterly newsletter, which was published between 1994 and 2012; the existing index stopped at 2002.)

With the global pandemic came the disappointment of cancelling upcoming events, but a silver lining emerged. As organizations everywhere began offering content on Zoom, CHC took the leap, too. The programs and communications committees were excited to present CHC's first Zoom webinars and to launch our YouTube channel. The series, called "Behind Every Great Cook Is a Great Mother," was hosted by CHC member John Ota with assistance from Julia.

The first eight live episodes were presented leading up to Mother's Day, with two subsequent longer interviews done in June and July. Sarah took on the editing of the Zoom recordings and uploaded them to YouTube. Attendance for the live events varied between about 50 and 100. To date on YouTube, the number of views per episode ranges between 65 and 500, with almost 50 subscribers to the channel. Sincere thanks to John for the idea, his work lining up the guests, and the excellent interviews he conducted. The series was a great success and brought CHC to the attention of more food enthusiasts.

The CHC newsletter, *Digestible Bits & Bites*, is circulated on the first of each month to 1,063 subscribers, including 297 members, 665 non-member subscribers, and exactly 100 media. It is also circulated on Facebook and Twitter. Several board members and volunteers continued to assist Sarah with writing and editing, including co-editor Julia, events editor Jane Black, and book review editor Elka Weinstein; all contributions are very much appreciated. When in-person events shut down in March, Sarah proposed new features to replace our event listings. Jane helped launch a regular section called "Destinations," showcasing Canadian heritage sites that offer food history programming.

Our team of book reviewers for the year includes Luisa Giacometti (Toronto), Gary Gillman (Toronto), Sher Hackwell (Vancouver), Maya Love (London, Ontario), Sylvia Lovegren (Toronto), Fiona Lucas (Toronto), Dana McCauley (Mississauga, Ontario), Susan Peters (Morrisburg, Ontario), Sonja Pushchak (Toronto), Laura Reilly (Comox, British Columbia) and Elka Weinstein (Toronto).

We were also pleased to welcome new members to the communications team: in the spring, Kesia Kvill took over as the editor of the newsletter's international conferences section. More recently, Liz Truchanowicz and Meaghan Froh Metcalf answered the programs chair's call for multimedia expertise; in

addition to helping that committee produce future online events, Liz and Meaghan have offered to assist with social media and related communications activities.

Our Facebook group continued to grow weekly over the past year and now has more than 2,000 members. Many followers, along with the communications team and board members, regularly share posts of interest. Popular this year were the CHC cooking challenges proposed by Sarah and by fellow board members Samantha George and Jennifer Meyers: the VE Day Tribute in May, the Canadian Cooking Challenge in June, featuring two classic 1920s cookbooks, and the Pie Pageant in July; in each case, the results were revealed in the subsequent month's newsletter.

CHC social media channels also include:

- 748 followers on Instagram
- 1,260 followers on Twitter

A December 2019 member drive attracted some new members, with one randomly selected new member receiving Julian Armstrong's book *Made in Quebec*.