

**University of Toronto**  
**University Arts Women's Club - University of Toronto Women's Association**

**NEWS & EVENTS**

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At our General Meeting of **February 16, 2023**, our Programme Coordinator Christine McClymont introduced our guest speaker, Dr. Colette Mesher. Her talk was entitled "The Busiest Buzz about Bees". Colette has completed a BSc at the University of Guelph, an MSc at Rhodes University in South Africa and a PhD at the University of Plymouth in the United Kingdom. Currently she runs her own company – Miel Rebel Honey, Est. 2018, based in Guelph, ON. She is a lead technician for the Technology Transfer Programme for the Ontario Beekeepers' Association. She also has a background in biology with all her works focusing on invertebrates.

Colette spoke about the importance of honey bees in particular, and how they are different from our native pollinators. She loves to teach and share her passion for bees. She told us what it's like to be a beekeeper and entrepreneur and how her journey has brought her to this point.

Colette shared with us honey bee history highlights – honey found in Egyptian tombs are still edible, and honey is naturally antibacterial so it does not need to be canned or heated. Then she described how hives are made up of a queen bee, worker bees, and drone bees. A queen bee has a longer body, can be of any colour, has a stinger and can live 3-5 years. Worker bees are the most numerous in the hive, start out as nurse bees, move on to cleaning the hive, live 6 weeks in summer or all winter. Drone bees are male honey bees, do not have stingers and are unable to feed without assistance from worker bees.

Colette told us some fascinating facts about *Apis mellifera*, the European honey bee. She said: "Apis mellifera is a fantastic pollinator – and that's because she's so fuzzy! The honey bee has pollen baskets – or what I like to call "pollen pants" – on her legs that allow her to bring back vast amounts of pollen from her flowery expeditions. Note I'm using the pronoun "she"? That's because 90% of the bees in a colony are female."

After Q&A period Sharon McCarthy, our President Elect, thanked Colette for her spectacular presentation on honey bees. It was absolute pleasure to hear about the busiest buzz about bees.



**Colette Mesher**

Ontario Bee Keepers' Association Technology Transfer Programme



Beekeeping is wonderful hobby but not for everyone!



A Queen Bee in a Hive



From the Hive to the Table

At our General Meeting on **March 16, 2023**, Christine McClymont was delighted to introduce Mary Ella Magill as our guest speaker. Mary Ella has been Christine's friend and a fellow singer in the Toronto Chamber Choir for over 40 years. Her presentation was based on her first book, *About Time, a memoir*.

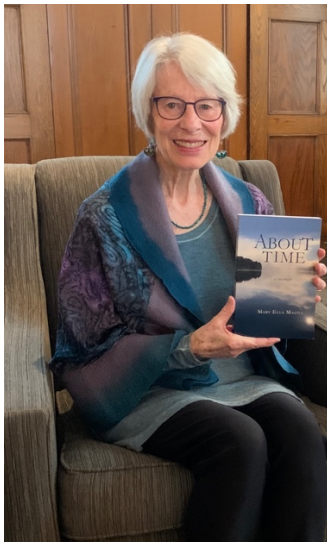
After attending McGill University, Mary Ella moved to Toronto where she led a successful career in human resources, often working in male-dominated government and corporate settings. She retired in 2010. Christine invited her to begin her talk by telling us how she found the mental and physical energy to write and publish her emotionally gripping memoir.

“Well,” she said, “I began by taking intensive courses in journaling and creative writing.” That was just the start of a long and time-consuming preparation. She continues to write to this day.

Her strongest motivation was the desire to explore and record her memories of a childhood in Creighton Mine in northern Ontario, a small mining town that has actually vanished (although the mine itself is still open). Her son is now the only living person on her branch of the family tree. She felt compelled to write this memoir to share her story with him, and to come to a deeper understanding of herself, her family and her relationships.

She says, “My stories are unique. They are my version of the truth of what happened. Some of them reveal secrets that the family tried to hide. But the themes that emerge are mostly universal: growing up in a small town; having a parent with an alcohol problem; being married and divorced in my twenties; and finding happiness in a second marriage and as a mother.” After an enthusiastic question-and-answer session, some Club members shared similar memories – including a love of sailing!

Sharon McCarthy, our President Elect, thanked Mary Ella for illuminating the strenuous process of writing a memoir and her fascinating depiction of life in a small mining town. Her books were available for sale at the end.



Mary Ella Magill  
Human Resources Manager at Ontario Power Generation, and  
President of M. E. Magill Consulting Ltd. (Retired)



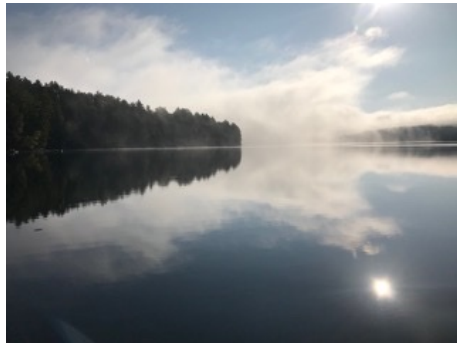
*About Time : a memoir*

by Mary Ella Magill

Published by Stones Throw Publications

Second Printing

Printed in Canada, 2021



*About Time : a memoir*

Cover photography by Mary Ella Magill

At our Spring Luncheon and Annual General Meeting on **April 20, 2023**, held at The Faculty Club, University of Toronto, Sharon McCarthy, President Elect introduced our guest speaker Eva Stachniak who spoke about her latest book *The School of Mirrors* - an astounding story of love and scandal in 18<sup>th</sup> century France.

Eva was first attracted to this subject when she came across a memoir by the ladies-maid to Louis XV's favourite mistress Madam de Pompadour. In this memoir there were vague mentions of the young girls who were trained unknowingly to become sex partners for the king and their subsequent treatment if they became pregnant. Eva was determined to find out more details and carried out extensive research about this practice, about the Versailles Palace where these encounters took place, about the house where these young girls lived and were groomed, and much about society at the time – especially about the lives of women many of whom were used, abused and discarded. She based her two main characters on what she had learned - Veronique, who was one of the “trainees” and Marie Louise, her daughter who was taken from her at birth.

Eva talked about her process of researching and writing, the necessity of visiting and thus visualizing different locations as they might have been in the 18<sup>th</sup> century in order to write convincingly about that

era. Important artifacts preserved in various museums and many reference books added to her knowledge. And her fascination and enthusiasm about the entire process was a pleasure to witness. After more fascinating details during the Q&A period, Gay Thomson thanked the speaker.



Eva Stachniak

Author of *The Winter Palace*,  
a smash hit about Queen Catherine the Great



Louis XV 1710-1774  
Queen Marie Leszczyńska 1703-1768

Madame de Pompadour 1721-1764

Those interested in joining UAWC/UTWA are invited to contact Linda Andrews, Membership Coordinator, at 416-485-4903 or [uawcutwa@gmail.com](mailto:uawcutwa@gmail.com)

Compiled by  
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