

Inspiring Women

Summer Issue:
Designing Women



FAWCO

Inspiring Women Worldwide

June 2017, Volume 1, Issue 2

CELEBRATING LIVES ACROSS THE FAWCO WORLD

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[Elinor Badanes, The Pajama Company](#) p. 29

[Tony Armand, BEMER](#) p. 42

We are thrilled to introduce three FAWCO members who are taking their businesses global! **Janet Darrow, Global Property Specialist; Elinor Badanes, The Pajama Company; and Tony Armand, BEMER.** We invite you to click on the links in their ads to take advantage of their products and services. Please let them know you saw the ad in **Inspiring Women**. For more information about our advertising options contact: **Elsie Bose, advertising@fawco.org**



FAWCO would like to thank [Esquire Group](#) for underwriting Inspiring Women as our Premier Sponsor. This month we have an interesting column on page 10 written by Esquire Group's President, Jimmy Sexton.

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Inspiration from the Editor



I am delighted to welcome you to our second edition of Inspiring Women. I hope you liked the first edition which was launched at the conference in Mumbai in April.

It's a full edition as you can tell, which I hope you will enjoy.

Following on from the launch edition, here at Inspiring Women HQ we have looked carefully at the feedback we were sent. We have tried to incorporate and tweak the magazine to use your ideas and thoughts wherever possible.

The magazine format is still very much a work in progress, however, so I would ask you to complete the online survey for this edition as well. If you don't tell us what you like and dislike we won't know! See page 48 for details.

Watch this space in the Fall for the third edition of *Inspiring Women*. It will focus on Educating Women. If you know anyone you think should be profiled please get in touch by July 15th. Also, don't forget we would love to feature one of your photos on our cover page. See page 48 for details of what we need.

We are hoping that our Fall edition will feature a new way of accessing the magazine, which will make it easier to read on a phone. Watch out for more details nearer the time.

Meanwhile, have a great few months and see you in the Fall...

Best wishes,

Liz x

Liz MacNiven

(inspiringwomen.editor@fawco.org)

This edition of the magazine is dedicated to the women of FAWCO who have made their way in the world of design. This time we have nine individual profiles :

- * Two architects
- * An interior designer
- * An engineer
- * A fashion designer
- * A handbag designer
- * A chocolate designer
- * A graphic artist
- * A print specialist!

Our regional focus is on Region 9 and all the good things going on there, while the individual club focus is on AWC Liechtenstein. (No idea where that is? Turn to page 21 to learn more). The outgoing Secretary for the FAWCO Foundation tells us more about The Foundation and its work too. Finally, Robin Meloy-Goldsby describes some of her wardrobe adventures while Jane Mobbie gives us food for thought with her piece on designing a woman's life.

To design something is to take it beyond the point of creation. Whether the idea evolves into something practical or magical, we salute these visionaries for their contributions that inspire us to think about the world in a new way.

Original ideas can scare the originator and those with whom the idea is shared. Distractions abound. Coping with nay-sayers at the beginning, the designers must stay laser-focused to succeed.

We are interested in the process of taking the vision from design to fruition. We want to know how the distractions are overcome. We want to know if the exposure to different cultures moves them from their vision or enhances it. And what defines a designer's success?

Women are sensitized to the organic beginning of things (no small wonder). Those that you will meet in this issue have dared to face the challenges of never-been-done-before skepticism. Their work in a wide range of "disciplines" re-defines that word.

Prepare to be amazed!

Designing Women

Inspiration from Greece: Architect



My name is Katerina Sirouni but most of my childhood friends call me Kathy and I am a member of AWOG - The American Women's Organization of Greece (awogreece.org). I am an active member and serve on the Board of Directors as Secretary and as Special Activities Co-Chair Person. I volunteer in our charity and fundraising events and also in organizing social and networking events to connect the working professionals of our group and to promote membership growth.

I was born in Chicago, Illinois but now I live in Athens, Greece. My parents are of Greek descent from a rural area of Northern Arkadia in the Peloponnese. They had both immigrated to the States, not as a lifestyle decision, but to seek better opportunities since their resources and education were both limited. Being deprived themselves, my parents always stressed the importance of receiving a good education and they both worked hard to make that happen.

The thought of returning to their original roots was always in their minds. We had a very strong Greek upbringing while we were in the States, speaking

Greek in our home, attending Greek School, Church and Sunday School, celebrating holidays traditionally, staying close to family and connecting with other Greek-American families. We moved back to Greece in 1982 after I graduated elementary school, a full-time Greek-American day school. It was a decision my parents made at the time primarily so that my brother and I could attend Greek high school and grow up as Greeks back in their home country. The new lifestyle was a challenge for me at first but moving here at a young age made the adjustment a smooth process.

I am a qualified architect. I received my degree in Architecture and Engineering from the National Technical University of Athens in Greece. Before establishing an independent practice in 2004, I worked for Alexandros C. Samaras & Associates S.A. (asamaras.gr) a renowned architectural firm on large scale, high-end projects such as venues for the Athens 2004 Olympic Games and luxury residential projects. In 2004, I set up my own firm, ksirouni_architects



(ksirouni.com) handling mainly residential design projects, renovation/construction work, on-site supervision as well as issuing all property related certification.

The construction/real estate market was hit very hard in the Greek government debt crisis and there were many changes in Greek property laws. I decided to expand my business and clientele where there was a new need which lead me to specializing in offering Design-Consulting-Property Management Services predominantly to non-Greek residents with property in Greece. So I became the “go-to-person” in this field.

To help owners decode and navigate Greek property ownership matters, I conduct workshops back in the States with a team of associates. I also issue a monthly newsletter and contribute articles in Chicago-based WindyCity Greek (windycitygreek.com), Greek-Australian Neos Kosmos (neoskosmos.com/news/en) and XPAT Athens (xpatathens.com). I also appear as a guest speaker on web-radio shows, Voice of Greece (webradio.ert.gr/i-foni-tis-elladas) of the Hellenic Broadcasting Corporation and Echoes of Athens (echoesofathens.com) that airs in Atlanta, Georgia.

My favorite work will always be the architecture and design however much consultation I do though!

GETTING TO KNOW KATHY

Describe your ideal day. I don't really have one. I love working. As the saying goes, “Choose a job you love and you will never have to work a day in your life”. However, if I did not have money to worry about, I would probably be soaking up sunsets at Mount Lycabettus gazing at the Acropolis and the city of Athens, or gazing at the Greek blue sea at the Temple of Poseidon.

If you could start all over again in any city or country, which one would it be and why?

I would most likely choose New York City. It's a creative and inspirational city for architects; a “theater of progress,” as Rem Koolhaas describes it in *Delirious New York*. The architecture, the museums, the art galleries and the design shops are everywhere. There's always something innovative and trendsetting going on.

Which book that you've read recently would you recommend?

Invisible Cities (Le Città Invisibili), a novel by Italo Calvino. The book is a travelogue that initiates an inspirational approach to visualize how cities could form and function without limitations to urban planning and laws.

If you became president of a country for a day, what would you do/change? I would definitely choose Greece. Greece's economic



crisis has become an odyssey without an end. We are a hardworking nation and should not be treated as a handout case. My motto would be to “Work in Solidarity”. I would work collectively in teams gathering the most successful and accomplished minds in their fields to create incentives to promote



entrepreneurship with groundbreaking ideas and create jobs to stop the brain drain, and the young generation from leaving.

Of all the people you have met in your life, whom do you admire most? There are many people who I admire and have been influenced by but if I would have to narrow my choices, I would say my parents. Growing up in a family of Greek immigrants helps build your character and way of thinking. My parents provided my brother and I strong values to be respectful to others, hard-working and independent, relying on our own strength and resources.

If you could meet one famous or influential woman, alive or dead, who would it be and why? There are so many to choose from but as an architect, I would say the late Zaha Hadid, the first woman to receive the Pritzker Architecture Prize, in 2004. She left her mark internationally for being conceptually innovative in her profession, redefining and reshaping architecture and design for the modern age.



Inspiration from France: Purse Designer



My name is Marjorie Renner and I am a member of the American Women's Group in Paris, France where I have been a past officer, and Chair of the fundraiser gala. I am originally from The Philippines.

I have been living "overseas" (outside the Philippines) for over 20 years, since my marriage to my husband Chris Renner. Due to his work with major sporting events such as the Olympics and the Tour de France, we have lived in numerous countries and cities, including Hong Kong, Los Angeles, London, Beijing and, for the past seven years, Paris. It has been quite an experience for our family and me.

The one constant has been my interest and work in the field of fashion. My first work in the Philippines was as a fashion model, which introduced me to world of fashion: designers, brands and events. This experience led me to found my own business about ten years ago- Renner Fashion, which really took off when I arrived in Paris.



My focus has been on the design, production and marketing of fashion accessories, particularly women's handbags, which I have sold under the brand name of Marjorie Renner in various markets around the world. All of my products are inspired by the natural resources of the Philippines, which I have always tried to incorporate into my work. I would consider these products as my most important career achievement. Personally, I am proud of the ongoing and varied accomplishments of my children, who continue to amaze me with their achievements.

Chris and I have three children: Kevin has followed in Chris's footsteps, becoming a broadcast producer for Major League Baseball (where he and his production crew won a Sports Emmy) and most recently for the world's biggest producer of e-sports (online video gaming competitions) in Los Angeles. Charlotte is our artist and is currently pursuing an arts degree at Parsons School of Design. Miranda, our youngest, is a high school student and has become an accomplished swimmer, competing at a national level in France.



GETTING TO KNOW MARJORIE

What things do you miss most about your home country? Firstly, the people, who are so open and kind, as well as the natural beauty that surrounds you on all of its islands. I try to get back as often as possible. But I do love the history, culture and beauty of all the things that France has produced and of course, the food and the wine!

Which book or film that you've seen recently would you recommend? I am not a big fan of movies but in preparation for our recent trip to Morocco, my husband and I watched the classic 1942 film entitled "Casablanca" with Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman.

Besides being a great film, I was impressed with the style of the era: simple but elegant. I guess I'm just a sucker for romance!

If you became president or leader of either your home country or host country for a day, what would you do/change? The biggest enemy of progress in the Philippines is the large scale of corruption at the highest levels of government. I would institute (for real this time!) a sweeping anti-corruption campaign to root out the worst offenders in the government. I am for honest and good governance.

If you could do any job in the world for one day, what would it be and why? Religious



conflict is the root of many of the problems in our society these days. Religion is powerfully motivating and humans fight over it too often. I would love to be a world religious leader, so I could use it as a platform to preach for unity between all religions based upon the one principle they all profess: LOVE. The problem is that it would take more than one day to have an impact!

Of all the people you have met in your life, whom do you admire most? When I was still in the Philippines, I worked with "Missionaries of Charity" with the nuns of Mother Theresa and was able to briefly meet her. Her kindness and drive in trying to help the poor really inspired me and led me to adopt two Filipino children whom I have helped pursue their dreams in the United States.

If you could meet one famous or influential woman, alive or dead, who would it be and why? Michelle Obama. I admire her intelligence and charm, and her ability to use those skills to effect positive change with child health and education programs. I hope she keeps up the good work in the years to come!



Expatriating Won't Solve Your Past US Tax Issues



Many Americans living abroad harbor a misconception about how expatriation affects their U.S. tax obligations. When I speak to various groups of Americans living overseas, inevitably the subject of tax compliance comes up during Q&A. One or two people almost always state that they are not in compliance, and rather than spending the time and money to get in compliance, they will simply expatriate (renounce their U.S. citizenship). Their logic is, if they are no longer a citizen, then they no longer have U.S. tax obligations.

WRONG! Expatriating will not solve their problem; in fact, it will most likely make it worse. Expatriating doesn't alleviate you of past U.S. tax obligations from when you were a citizen.

If you expatriate without being tax compliant for the prior 5 years, you will be classified as a "covered expatriate". The majority of the people, if they were tax compliant, would be considered non-covered expatriates (i.e. having net worth of less than \$2M and average income tax liability for the past 5 years under the \$161,000 threshold). By not being tax compliant at the time of expatriation, you will be considered a covered expatriate, and be subject to all the tax consequences associated with that including; a market-to-market tax on unrealized gains, most retirement accounts being treated as distributed upon expatriation, and burdening your U.S. heirs with estate and/or gift tax on any amounts given or left to them. In addition, covered expatriates can have difficulty even visiting the U.S. because they are assumed to have expatriated for tax purposes.

Fortunately, most people I meet at my presentations have not expatriated yet, which gives them the opportunity to get in compliance for the past 5 years before expatriating. When things are straightened out, they can then expatriate as non-covered expatriates (assuming the other criteria are met). Having expatriated, they will be relieved of their future U.S. tax obligations, other than for U.S. source income.

On occasion I do run into a poor soul who expatriated without getting advice; unfortunately, all I can do is help them clean up the mess as best I can.

Bottom line—expatriating will not fix your tax problems!

Jimmy Sexton, LL.M., is an expert in the field of international taxation, with an emphasis on expat issues. He has presented to American expats at groups that include American women's clubs throughout Europe and is a sought-after expert for several news organizations including CNN and the Washington Post. He is the President of Esquire Group, an international tax preparation firm and Premier Sponsor of *Inspiring Women Magazine*.

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Inspiration from Bahrain: Engineer/Coach



My name is Tosin Arowojolu and I am an individual member of FAWCO living in Bahrain. There is an American Women's Association (AWA) Bahrain; however, it is not a FAWCO club. I was first introduced to FAWCO in 2012 while I was the president of AWA Bahrain. Since then I have attended two regional meetings: the first in Doha, Qatar in 2013 and then in Amman, Jordan in 2014. I also went to The Experience and Stand Up Against Human Trafficking in the Netherlands in 2016 and recently attended the Biennial Conference in Mumbai. I co-presented a workshop "When Displacement Becomes Personal" at the regional conference in Amman and also in Mumbai and I am a member of the FAWCO Human Rights Team.

I am originally from Nigeria and in 1990 immigrated to the USA. I have lived in Bahrain since 2009. I moved to New York in 1990 from Nigeria to complete my Masters in Civil Engineering. From New York, I moved to Los Angeles to work for the City of Los Angeles Department of Public Works in 1992. I worked there until 2005 and resigned shortly after the

birth of my first son. I worked primarily on projects that were related to the waste water treatment plants that the City ran as a construction project manager. In 2009, after my second son had been born, I moved to Bahrain to join my husband who had been working in the Middle East since 2001. At first I was a stay-at-home mom and then I took on the presidency of the AWA (American Women's Association) from 2011 to 2013. During my term, we were honored to be the first non-Bahraini NGO to be awarded a grant, which we used for a quilt project with various organizations, groups, individuals etc. submitting a block-sized 25" quilt square.

The purpose of the Bahrain quilt was two-fold:

- a. through the process of quilting to foster a spirit of community and unity and by patching together quilt blocks made by different organizations and individuals – both Bahraini and non-Bahraini - we wanted to reflect in a literal sense the "social fabric of a nation";
- b. to educate women in the art of quilting so they can use it to empower themselves economically by using it as a means to a livelihood.

Our completed quilt was an astonishing 13m x 3.5m having 90 blocks. The AWA later received an award from the Bahrain Ministry of Social Development in recognition of this effort.

We also organized and raised funds through different events such as the first ever International Parade called "It's a small world" highlighting over 40 countries, a spring ball, craft fair and our main biennial fundraiser, the Cherry Tree Trot, which is one of very few charity walk/run events in Bahrain focused on the mentally and physically challenged.

I have two sons, Dapo, 12, and Seth, 8. They both attend the British School of Bahrain and enjoy various after school activities such as piano, drums, Taekwondo, chess, basketball and swimming. My husband, Andrew, was born in England so is both British and also Nigerian. We met while we were both studying Engineering in Nigeria. He works for a telecommunications company in Kuwait and flies home every weekend to be with us. It can be rather challenging for him to be away during the week, so we try to spend as much time together as a family on the weekends.

My life has evolved significantly from being a construction project manager. Today I have a business as a certified leadership trainer, coach and speaker with the John Maxwell Team.

Now I work with businesses, individuals, organizations to improve their leadership and communication skills, through one-on-one coaching, group coaching, workshops, lunch and learn and keynote speaking. I



have traded in my hard hat and steel-toed boots needed for construction sites to being more flexible with my time and wardrobe.

Over the years I have had the wonderful opportunity to work with some amazing people who have wanted transformation in their lives. Being able to share their journey of change is profound and I consider it a privilege that they would have me be part of it. As a result, I am also continually being transformed.



GETTING TO KNOW TOSIN

If you were moving back to your home country, what would you miss most about your host country?

After living in the US for almost twenty years, that is my home country. I have lived in Bahrain for almost 8 years. If I were to move, I would certainly miss the hospitality of the people. I have met some of the nicest people here and made some lifelong friends. I also have been enriched by meeting people from literally all over the world and it has been a great experience for us as a family.

What things do you miss most about your home country?

I miss being able to go for long scenic drives while enjoying the change in scenery from place to place. I also miss the beautiful blue skies with clouds you feel you could touch and greenery. Of course, friends and family too. Things can be pricey here in Bahrain so I always look forward to shopping and picking up the latest home gadgets whenever we go back home. As a former amateur competitive ballroom dancer, I miss being able to do different styles of dance. I'm thankful that we do have dance here but it is limited in comparison.

Which book that you've read recently would you recommend?

I would recommend the *15 Invaluable Laws of Growth* by leadership expert John C. Maxwell. I have been interested in personal development and growth since I was a teenager. Being a very shy girl, I wanted to learn how to be more confident and assertive. Although not so shy any more, I still have lots of areas for improvement. The *15 Invaluable*

Laws of Growth has helped me be more intentional about my life, learn to focus on my strengths and increased my desire to add value to others.

Of all the people you have met in your life, whom do you admire most?

I have an incredible mother. Growing up, she wanted to be an architect but was discouraged by her family and told it was not a profession for women. Undeterred, she went on to become a nurse, which supposedly was more in line with a profession for women. She was not bitter about having to choose a different profession but made the best of the opportunity given her. She is very hard working and while working full time she also started her own business, a book shop. She is a great example of a mother, mother-in-law and wife and I hope that I can emulate her.

If you could meet one famous or influential woman, alive or dead, who would it be and why?

Oprah Winfrey has always amazed me. Although she had very humble beginnings and major setbacks, including poverty, sexual abuse, teenage pregnancy, drugs, and could have been understandably dissuaded, she did not waver in her pursuit of having a life of significance. Not only is she considered by many to be the world's most powerful woman, she is also a great philanthropist who is constantly looking to help those in need.



Inspiration from Belgium: Chocolatier



My name is Carolien Krijnen and I was born and raised in Antwerp, Belgium. I still live with my husband Kristoffel in Antwerp to this day. I am a member of AWC Antwerp where I especially enjoy getting involved in charity events. My schedule is quite irregular and sometimes extremely busy, resulting in the fact that I don't have the time to participate actively in all the preparations. If I can, I offer help in organizing events, and with finding interesting guest speakers.

I've always lived in Belgium even though I have a Dutch passport as both my parents are Dutch. I attended the European University Institute where the majority of the lessons were given in English and I've always had a strong connection with the cultural heritage of the USA: movies, music, literature, and so on.

After I graduated from the European University I started working and for the next 15 years I was active in several marketing domains such as advertising, event organizing, market research, which enabled me to travel a bit through Europe. Since I have always been very interested in the history of the city where I grew up, Antwerp, and I am always keen to learn something, I followed a two year learning program for professional tour guides and was so enthusiastic I quit my full time job and started my own company. At first I only got tours through the Tourist Information Office, but later my website got noticed by larger multinationals who asked me to organize leisure programs in the city when there were conferences and meetings. Ever since then I've been a full time professional tour guide and I take groups on themed walks through the city of Antwerp in Flemish, French and English: a perfect job because I get to spend each working day with people who just want to enjoy themselves, and I can show them my favorite parts of the city I live in.

I am an only child and I have no children. My mother was an only child, too; she passed away last summer, and all my relatives, besides my father, live abroad. Now before you start feeling sorry for me, I am living a wonderful life. My partner Kristoffel and I have been together for 20 years now and recently moved (for the 4th time in 20 years). We're very happy in our new found home, a rather large old house in the city centre with a nice and quiet terrace where we can enjoy being outside together with our 2 cats. Since we're so centrally located,



people drop by every once in a while and if I am not running from one appointment to the next, I am happy to pause and have a coffee with them.

As I reached the age of 50 (my birthday was last March) I realized I wasn't getting any younger, and that, if I wanted to do something significant with my life, I better do it right now. My tour business company is doing ok but got a blow after the terrorist attacks in Brussels last year so I needed to rethink my options.

It still had to be something that would involve spending time with a lot of people. I'd perish sitting all alone behind a desk every day of the week watching the hours tick by. In my first years as a tour guide in Antwerp, I developed a chocolate tour and started specializing more and more in chocolate. I took two semesters of chocolate skills training at a specialized school in Antwerp, took a masterclass at Callebaut and, when we found the perfect house with a commercial ground floor, we bought it and I started my chocolate studio.

The ground floor of the house is now fully equipped as a professional chocolate studio, and that is where I organize my chocolate workshops. I host these for multinationals as team building sessions, but also for women as a bachelorette party, or for families and friends who love chocolate. Let's be honest, who doesn't love chocolate? So now I am a chocolate designer as well as a tour guide!



GETTING TO KNOW CAROLIEN

Describe your ideal day. I wake up to the sound of birds singing. After a cup of coffee with a croissant on our terrace with my husband and our cats, we go for a stroll in the city center. We enjoy a light lunch in one of our favorite places and read newspapers. I'd meet one or more of my girlfriends for a drink later and we'd laugh at all the fun things that have happened to us since we last met.

Which book that you've read recently would you recommend? I totally recommend what I call "Margaret Mitchell's Gone with the Wind", which I recently read for the second time. Now I am not referring to the epic novel about Scarlett O'Hara that I have read at least 8 times, not to mention the movie I must have seen 5 times at least, but I am talking about the book *A Bestseller's Odyssey from Atlanta to Hollywood*.

This wonderfully written book from 2001 gives the reader insight in how Margaret Mitchell struggled writing and more particularly, managing, one of the biggest bestsellers ever in an

era before the internet, even before the telefax, house telephone and (electronic) typewriters.

It is thanks to her that writers can now benefit from international copyrights. It is a very interesting read, not only for huge fans such as me, but for everybody interested in the process of writing, editing, publishing and promoting a book, including all the international versions, both the endorsed ones as the illegal, pirate versions.

Of all the people you have met in your life, whom do you admire most ? I recently met Diane Von Furstenberg in Antwerp. What an inspiring, amazing woman!! She's done so much in her life to support and help other women, not to mention the invention of the one item every woman should have in her wardrobe, a wrap dress. She received an honorary doctorate from the University of Antwerp for her exceptional merit in fashion and entrepreneurship but also for her intense commitment concerning women's rights and

human rights in general.

If you could meet one famous or influential woman, alive or dead, who would it be and why?

There have been so many inspiring and influential women. It's hard to pick just one. There is Coco Chanel who got us women out of our corsets. Or Hatshepsut, one of the very few female pharaohs of Egypt; Simone de Beauvoir, a woman with brains and an interesting philosophy, ... but if I can pick just one, it would be the Austrian empress Maria Theresa who has always fascinated me. Her reign lasted 40 years and those 40 years were very prosperous ones for Austria. She promoted commerce and agriculture and was a lover of fine arts. She gave birth to 16 children herself, the majority girls, which is probably one of the reasons she reformed education. Thanks to her, children of both sexes had to attend school from 6 to 12 years old. By insisting they should, she improved both the knowledge of and opportunities for all young Austrian girls.

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Home and Away: What to Wear?



Home and Away columnist Robin Meloy Goldsby reinvents herself, one outfit at a time.

What to Wear

A middle-aged American woman playing the piano at a castle in Germany has legitimate wardrobe concerns and design options. Most cocktail dresses and evening gowns are designed for chichi events that involve nothing more strenuous than posing in a corner with a tilted head, a shy-sly Princess Di smile, and a fluted champagne glass. They are cut of silk and velvet, feature beaded panels, and often include decorative detail that slips, slides, and snags if the wearer dares to inhale, laugh, or eat a meatball.

It might look easy, but playing the piano for hours at a time involves an athletic prowess more often associated with trapeze artists and archers. We swing and sway, we remain statue-still while we focus our minds and bodies, we stretch, and we leap without a net when necessary. Imagine one of the Flying Zucchini's performing in high heels and a full-length evening gown with a fishtail skirt and a jewel-encrusted top that chafes her underarms. Treacherous. Or what if William Tell had been forced to shoot that apple from his son's head while an annoying puffed sleeve with seed-pearl embroidery slipped from one shoulder? Poor little Walter

would have wound up with an arrow in his thigh. Or worse.

It might be a niche market, but really, someone should come design a line of gowns for performing female musicians. Something with a little pizzazz, a little Lycra, and a lot of draping.

"Well," says a musician friend. "Except for the pizzazz part, that would be a burqa."

I pause for a moment and think about a cocktail pianist wearing a burqa.

"A burqa with bling," I say. "Perfect."

My Wardrobe: A Brief History

Nantucket

Back in the seventies I loved to dress like Barbie. When I was eighteen I wore tube tops and Dolly Buster halters combined with see-through chiffon skirts so short they had matching panties. They were called Sizzlers. Bad enough to go to school like this, but I was showing up for cocktail piano gigs in these getups. Because I was eighteen and on a budget, I also wore secondhand prom dresses to work - not the prim and proper Little Bo Peep gowns popular with the nice Catholic girls, but disco-mania, hooker-hottie designs intended to make a perfectly healthy teenage pianist look like one of Gangsta Fatboy's groupies. Horrible.

I favored one dress - an electric-blue sateen-spandex thing - that was cut down to here and up to there. It threatened to expose my left breast every time I reached for the bass notes. Did this bother me? No. I was a feminist! More power to me. I learned to play while yanking at the bodice, wondering why five or six drunken sailors crowded around the piano and stuffed money in my tip jar every time I pounded out "I Feel the Earth Move." I lunged for the keys and actually believed I had a loyal group of seafaring, gin-guzzling, Carole-King-loving fans. But now I know it was the blue dress. They yelled for

more. I kept going. In a weird way, that dress taught me how to play. So I suppose it was good for something.

I wore frosted lip-gloss and a drugstore fragrance called Wind Song by Prince Matchabelli because my high-school boyfriend saved his money and gave me a bottle for graduation. I decided it would be my signature scent. Forever.

Everything is forever when you're eighteen.

New York City: the Early Years

In the eighties I dashed from one Manhattan location to another, covering lunches, cocktail hours, and late-night piano shifts in hotels that catered to tourists, wearing swollen white tennis shoes with lightning bolts on the sides. I dropped the Happy Ho look and entered a new era of Piano Girl fashion - a makeover inspired by my newfound ability to buy dresses made by companies other than JCPenney.

I developed a fondness for Betsey Johnson, Calvin Klein, and Isaac Mizrahi. I hardly ever paid retail for these beautiful things - I bought them from a member of the Marriott Marquis housekeeping staff who set up shop in a hotel ladies' room in the toilet stall for the handicapped. Back then we said "handicapped", not disabled. Maria sold her hot-off-the-truck garments by hanging them on rails inside the stall. I shopped at Stall for the Handicapped on my breaks. Maria was a stellar saleswoman, and it was hard to beat the prices.

I remember a bright yellow silk coat I bought from her. It fell to the floor in fragile layers and made me feel like a butterfly when I flitted across the cavernous Marriott lobby. But at the piano the fabric tangled around my elbows and twisted around my knees. I looked like a crumpled piece of birthday-party giff-wrap with a head and hands.

Although I hadn't yet succumbed to support hose or underpants with stretchy tummy panels, I did begin to wear a well-constructed bra. During this phase I began searching for the perfect strapless bra, a mission that continues to this day. Structural engineers know how to hold up multiple floors of a building with one set of well-placed suspension cables, so you'd think

they could design a comfortable strapless bra for a pianist. But structural engineers don't have to sit at a Steinway playing arpeggios while wearing an armpit-exposing camisole in a delicate shade of taupe. I doubt that many of them even know what taupe is, which is okay because they have more important tasks.

The thing is, no one forced me to dress this way. It was a choice. I loved dressing up, I loved shopping, I loved leaping out of taxis in my jeans and sneakers and running to the ladies' room with my gig bag strapped over



my shoulder. I never carried music or set lists or sound equipment. Instead, I brought along a collapsible evening gown in a festive color—raspberry! mango!—and a tissue-thin scarf I could throw over my shoulders when the meat-locker air conditioner kicked on in the middle of my second set. I also carried two pairs of high heels, knowing that my pedal foot (bunion!) would start to ache a few hours into the gig and I would want to change shoes. One pair of golden sandals, purchased on sale at Bergdorf Goodman in 1984, has been with me for over thirty years. They still hurt. They're still in my gig bag. They are the only things from that part of my life that fit, so I cling to them, thinking they'll march me back to my twenties if I ever need to return. They are the Piano Girl version of Dorothy's ruby slippers, twin metallic talismans that remind me of home.

The accessory pocket of my gig bag held glittery barrettes, rhinestone clips, and sparkly pins and necklaces from Grandma Curtis, all of them offering a pain- and risk-free way to smarten an outfit while reminding me of her. Before she died

she had packed all of her costume jewelry in a white cardboard box. "These things are for Robin," her note said. "She's the only one crazy enough to wear them." After she was gone I would play her favorite song - "Theme from Love Story" - and feel the weight of her fake-topaz bracelet circling my wrist.

New York City: the Final Years

For several years my closet resembled a black hole. I became a reverse negative of myself - blonder hair, darker clothes, skinnier body. I was nobody's trophy wife, but away from the piano I looked the part - half artiste, half social X-ray. I entered my minimalist stage, favoring gowns that didn't deviate from the color palette of a bruise.

New York City was full of paper-thin women in black crepe dresses. I wanted to be one of them and blend into the gallery-going museum-hopping chic-but-trendy Kir-sipping crowd - but, with a grand piano in front of

me, I never quite fit in. I hid behind my hair and accessorized my outfits with items from Grandma's cardboard box. I discovered her clip earrings with dark stones - polished hunks of jet and deep-blue faux sapphire that suited my wardrobe and my mood.

I wore Chanel No. 5 because it smelled the way I felt. There, but not really. I didn't believe in forever anymore. I tossed the scarves. They were driving me crazy, the way they kept slipping off and falling into fabric puddles at my feet.

I learned to despise hyphenated fashion terms like peep-toe, demi-cup, semi-gloss, push-up, and sling-back when I discovered that all of these things not only looked tacky-tacky, they hurt-hurt. I rearranged my closet, getting rid of anything with ruffles, sequins, bright colors, or feathers. I wanted plain and simple. I wanted people to stop looking and start listening. I wanted loose and light and noncommittal, preferably in medium-weight silk shantung, with sleeves. I wanted to disappear into a midnight-blue piano mist.

Then I fell in love, an event that called for a new look. I bought an Anna Sui bridal mini-

dress that I could also wear to piano jobs, minus the giant veil. Color returned to my wardrobe. I stopped disappearing and decided it was okay to be both seen and heard.

Forever made a comeback.

Bergisch Gladbach, Germany

Long before I began playing at a German castle, I spotted a ball skirt in the window of the Cologne Laura Ashley store. I dragged my family into the store so I could touch the skirt. Pale pink roses were embroidered on the rich crème silk, and three underlayers of silk and tulle gave the garment a gentle poof. It was the perfect skirt for a lunch date in eighteenth-century Versailles. Not exactly optimal for a day trip to the Cologne Zoo, which was the extent of my social life in the late nineties. I had taken four years off from piano gigs in upscale hotels, opting instead



for babies and writing at home. Rewarding, but lonely. My glamorous wardrobe, a size too small and several years out of style, sat in the back of my closet. I claimed not to miss the dress-up routine, but I couldn't explain the sadness I felt whenever I caught sight of all those pretty things, gossamer souvenirs of a past I was

happy to have escaped.

In an act of kindness I shall never forget, my husband waited for the end-of-season sale, sneaked back to Laura Ashley, and bought that skirt for me. Two weeks later, I was invited to play at the castle. I wore the skirt, and the maître d', a lovely man named Monsieur Thomann, tossed pink rose petals on the piano. I played there for fourteen years. I still have the Laura Ashley skirt, along with a large collection of formal dresses purchased on sale over the last decade. They are beautiful things, but decidedly uncomfortable.

The older I get, the more I consider how nice it would be to get away from all of this twisting, pinching, and gapping and wear, perhaps, a bathrobe to work. Or at least a ball gown cut like a

bathrobe. I remember one pianist in New York City - let's call her Sandy - who got in trouble for wearing a Statue of Liberty outfit, complete with headpiece. It was hard to make a bad wardrobe choice in mid-1980s Manhattan, but Sandy's caftan and spiked crown caused a minor uproar with Marriott management.

Now I wonder if Sandy was on to something. I play at fancy places. I could, if I wanted to, wear a tiara, preferably something tasteful with large emeralds. It would draw attention away from my body, which I could then drape in a velvet cape or an ermine-trimmed robe. I'd wear relaxed-fit pants under the cape, along with an expensive support bra capable of sequestering the twins during those bass-note lunges. So far, my fear of looking like Queen Victoria has stopped me from following through on this idea. Even Grandma Curtis, lover of all things sparkling and bright, drew the line at wearing tiaras. Plus my daughter would never talk to me again if I started wearing a crown to work.

Fact: I now spend more money on well-designed undergarments than I spend on dresses. Ball gowns, with their nipped waists and tight bodices, require major foundation help. Do not get me started on Spanx, those flesh-colored medieval instruments of torture meant to smooth out the mature figure. Other women swear by them. They make me feel like a stuffed sausage and that's not a great thing when I'm trying to make music. "If you look good you feel good" does not apply to a fifty-year-old woman who plays the piano for a living. If I feel good, I am probably wearing my Ultimate Pajamas, a

sweat suit, or a potato sack. Nobody feels good sitting at the piano in a skintight satin dress with a boned corset - unless, of course, she is eighteen, oblivious to pain, and wearing Wind Song eau de toilette.

Which leaves me with my present-day wardrobe dilemma. Shall I chuck the fancy gear and start dressing like a man? A reliable tuxedo would be a welcome relief after so many years of death by evening gown. I can feel it coming on, another wardrobe makeover - this one, finally, focused on comfort.

Grandma Curtis will continue to provide her glitter-girl accessories. But I shall wear lovely suits in lightweight wool, with loose-fitting pants and non-clinging jackets. I'll select silken blouses in jewel tones and lingerie that's soft and non-constricting.

And the Bergdorf Goodman golden sandals? They will stay in my gig bag, polished and ready to go, just in case I have another change of heart. They'd even look good with a burqa.

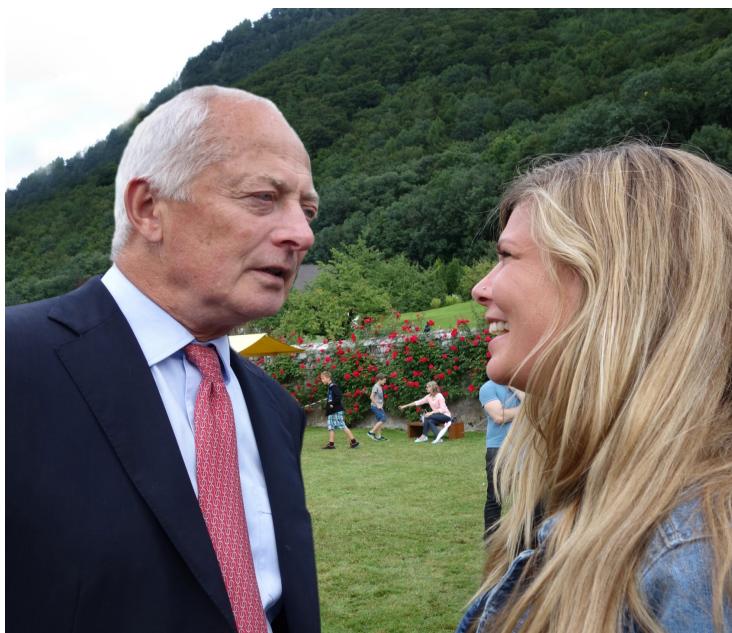


Robin Meloy Goldsby (AIWC Cologne) is the author of *Piano Girl; Rhythm; Waltz of the Asparagus People; and Manhattan Road Trip*. Goldsby's career as a pianist has taken her from roadside dives to posh New York City venues and exclusive resorts, and on to the European castles and concert stages where she now performs. Robin has seven solo piano recordings to her name and has appeared in the USA on National Public Radio's *All Things Considered* and *Piano Jazz with Marian McPartland*. Robin is a Steinway Artist. She lives in Cologne, Germany, with her husband and two adult children.

A Club Inspires: AWC Liechtenstein

There are FAWCO clubs of all sizes and shapes across the world. A Club Inspires is a feature where you will learn more about one of them. This time we are pleased to share with you one of the smallest FAWCO clubs, based in Region 6 -: AWC Liechtenstein. Over to their FAWCO Rep Elizabeth Schädler.

I must admit, never in my wildest dreams did I imagine I would be living in Liechtenstein. It's just not the kind of place you even consider. But here I am now, a year and a half later, speaking phrases of the local dialect and enjoying knowing another way of life. Liechtenstein is tiny; only about 35,000 people call it home. You can drive from one side of the country to the other (the long route) in about 25 minutes. The entire country is located in the Alps and makes you want to put on a Julie Andrews skirt and twirl and sing. And we have a prince, a real, live prince.



With the prince on Prince Day (August 15)

Being the anomaly that it is, Liechtenstein takes some getting used to. Luckily, I knew small town life from being raised in Kentucky but to my good fortune I didn't remember that everyone would know who I was while I was still looking at them as passing strangers. I would wave anyway knowing that eventually I would know who they were. I'd walked into another world where everything looked familiar but nothing was done in quite the same way. I am sure you can relate.

I tried to meet people quickly. If someone extended an opportunity for connection, I made sure I always said yes and I told people what I needed: friends. Through this, it was recommended that I search out Beth W., a musician and an American from California, because she is part of the AWCL (American Women's Club of Liechtenstein). Bells dinged in my head. THAT was exactly what I needed. So I found her, playing a gig, and told her I was new here. I'd married a man from Liechtenstein, who I had met traveling, and we decided to put down roots. I said that I didn't know anyone and asked her about the club. She was instantly my friend and I joined the club not knowing how beneficial an experience it would be.

The AWCL isn't only for women living in Liechtenstein, as that would be a puny number. In order to live in Liechtenstein you must be from here, or married-in. Most expats live right over the border and make the daily commute to work because they don't have permission to live here. Our club is composed of women from the Rheintal Valley (named after the river, Rhine, which runs along the border) and includes small parts of Switzerland and Austria too. We have 24



members as of now and six of us are on the board. I took the role as the FAWCO representative spontaneously after two months in the club.

The purpose of the AWCL is to bring together women from the USA living in Liechtenstein, Austria and Switzerland; to further their companionship and promote mutual interests; to enhance their

understanding of the Rhine Valley, Vorarlberg and especially the Liechtenstein area; and to promote mutual interests between USA citizens and regional residents. We were founded in 1994 and have been a member of FAWCO the whole time.

As our club is small, we are a tight-knit group of women. It is almost as if you've suddenly acquired many cousins with connections, all in the same situation. Although some of our members have been here 20 years they, of course, all still strongly identify with being American. Although we try not to stand out too much, we always will. What is special about us, though, is that we are a strong support system for each other: through the unfortunate experiences of custody battles, cancer and uncertain times to the celebrations of birth, the laughter over shared foreign experiences and the planning of events. We celebrate the Fourth of July



AWC Liechtenstein Board: Susan (President), Beth S. (FAWCO Rep), Marilyn, (Secretary), Beth W. (Website), Ursina (V.P.), and Emanuela (Treasurer).



together, as well as Thanksgiving with a Swiss twist. We go bowling and take walks through the Alps followed with fondue. We play music, make art and live a life full of new things. Our annual meeting is in Feldkirch, Austria in February. It is a time to elect (or re-elect) our board members, discuss and plan and come together for a special dinner.

We also think of others. This year we donated to three global charities. Saving children in Nepal (www.nagnepal.org), Swiss-based aid for Africa (www.jam-schweiz.org) and Hands-on help for the poor, sick and suffering worldwide (www.isoimpact.org).

The AWC of Liechtenstein is an eclectic group. You'd probably never lump us together if we were living in the same town in the US but here we share a common thread and friendship. Susan, our president, has been living here many years and works as the friendly and gentle dental hygienist. Beth W., who manages our website and makes our lives shiny and light, is a professional musician and photographer. Emanuela, who is Italian by nature, collects the olives from trees and makes oil. She also designs and sells cashmere sweaters made in Italy. Marilyn is in a rock band and teaches English. Ursina is our Swiss vice-president and our local expert. She is also periodontist. As for me, I am Beth S., a traveler, an adventure seeker, and a new mother of a 4-month-old baby girl.

We share a pretty high quality of life here and we know we are fortunate. Having the opportunity to join women from the US offers us camaraderie in our woes and our joys and knowing that we are also a part of something larger, such as FAWCO, reminds us that we are never alone. Living abroad gives us the opportunity to see not only the vast differences in the world, but to gain the eyes to see what connects us all. We are all in this world together no matter what our stories are.

Hope to see you
in Liechtenstein
some day!

**Elizabeth
Schädler**

(www.awc-fl.net)



View of the Valley with the Rhine taken from Liechtenstein. Switzerland is across the river. Photo by Klaus Schädler

Inspiration from India: Fashion Designer



My name is Meenakshi G. Advani and I am the President of the American Women's Club of Mumbai (AWCM), India (2014-2017). Recently I was the Chair for FAWCO's 43rd Biennial Conference in 2017.

My life journey has been quite unconventional. I was born and raised in Bombay, India (Mumbai was formerly called Bombay), but moved to Florida for my college education, living and working in Los Angeles and Colorado for many years. In 2007, I returned to live in Mumbai after living in the US for 25 years. An unusual expat life, I would say!

I studied Fine Arts at the University of Florida, then worked in Film and Theatre, having received my SAG card in Los Angeles. I did some cross-cultural films and industrial short

films, acted and directed stage shows -plus I worked at one of the largest consulting firms in the world, McKinsey & Company in Los Angeles as well as at Telebrands "As Seen on TV" Products, heading their West Coast/Beverly Hills Office.

My next career move was to establish my own business, Rosemoon, Inc. in Los Angeles and Butterfly Designs and Exports Pvt. Ltd in Mumbai, as an independent entrepreneur, small-scale industry, with 90 employees in my office and factory in Mumbai and a showroom in Los Angeles. I designed and distributed clothing, home furnishings and accessories to Federated Department Stores across the US, including Nordstrom, Barneys New York, Neiman Marcus, Saks Fifth Avenue, Tommy Bahama and couple of my products reached the Trump residence in NY!

It was a joy and achievement to work with more than 200 boutiques in addition to the larger stores and with that, almost 50-60 designers and smaller companies, developing handcrafted higher-end clothing and textile products made in India with all natural fiber. Block printed designs and embroidered value-add items onto textiles and end products were my specialty, which gained a lot of popularity among



many companies in the US. After I moved back to Mumbai in 2007, I opened an art gallery in partnership with the Jaipur Art Gallery at the Amber Fort, while continuing with my business of textile products under the umbrella of Beltree Group, until I had to "shut up shop" due to the recession in America and demanding personal issues.



Spilling the beans, I have no children: after trying for many years including three IVFs, I decided that this meant a different journey for me. The single thought inspired me - there are many children in India that I could help - giving rise to a new journey. I lost my parents, dad in 2002 very suddenly and mom in 2013 after a 12-year battle with Alzheimer's. During my business travels to and from the USA and India, I met Vivek Rai Gupta my love and life partner, with whom I am happily settled and who graciously supports my endeavours. My extended family, including my two sisters, cousins, nieces and nephews, are spread across the world, including the USA, New Zealand, Canada, Toronto, Australia, Dubai and India.

My life has evolved in many ways. While in business, it was a joy to be a social enterprise, training and employing young girls post the 10th grade to work in accounts, procurement and quality control in my Mumbai factory, at the highest pay scale prevalent at the time with strict accountability. The five work spaces, "Galas", I had in the Laxmi Mill Compound were comfortable, clean and air-conditioned. There was an amazing interdependence shared, with peace and respect between the employees, both the young men and women, including the Hindus and Muslims who worked together, celebrating each other's festivals like Diwali and Ramadan, praying and eating together, which was a marvel to me. I loved working and designing in India and exploring my creativity with the crafts available.

I enjoyed using vibrant colors and applied my costume design skills from working in theatre. I loved using patterns, fits, styles, embroidery, textiles, working with skilled labor known as the "karigars," as well as interacting with amazing women across America. Together we collaborated and created innovative designs in clothing, soft furnishings and accessories, and these became the soul and passion of my work - which fortunately did bring in substantial revenue.

After putting my business on hold, my greatest achievement was the ability to press the pause button, and take care of my mom while she lay bedridden for more than seven years. I also took time to sort out many family matters and re-direct my energies into AWCM charities supporting girls and women, eventually leading to a higher goal, beyond my expectations, which was the honor of being the Chair for FAWCO's 43rd Biennial Conference.

Making "*life my career*" and not "*my career my life*" has seemed to open all kinds of doors. Anything is possible if you allow destiny to cross your path.

GETTING TO KNOW MEENAKSHI

What 5 words would you use to describe yourself at your best/ less than your best? So I put it out there to my friends and here is what they came up with. Best: dynamic, trusted, elegant, forgiving, generous. Less than best: shuts herself off emotionally, projects strong opinions



If you could start all over again in any city or country, which one would it be and why?

I would love to start over in Paris, France. I love the city with its architecture and history and for the wonderful women I have recently met who live in Paris. I had learned how to speak French when in school, and having been in the fashion and textile industry for many years, it would be a lot of fun to explore the area in Paris where designs and trends are established for the industry. I enjoy the food, the general lifestyle and like the geographical location in Europe. The thought of wine and cheese as my staple diet with the wonderful breads is not such a bad thought either.

If you became president or leader for a day, what would you do/change? When living in Los Angeles, after the 1992 Rodney King riots, the Rebuild LA program emerged, which

apparently was not successful due to internal political handicaps. Their attempt was to improve health, education, housing and the environment. It would be great to see this come into effect in both India and also Los Angeles. The Northridge earthquake in LA in 1994 unfortunately created a 20 billion dollar loss. Here in India, the Congress looted India and the deep-rooted corruption prevents any kind of sustainable growth. As a leader, I would reinstate the Re-Build LA project and then see how this could work in Mumbai also.

If you could meet one famous or influential woman, alive or dead, who would it be?

Cleopatra of Egypt inspires me for many reasons. She was beautiful, intellectual, had love affairs, was feminine, a tenacious leader in her own right, well dressed and unconventional. I am a fan of classic tales and mythology. Her personality traits and character and way of thought during that time, surrounded by powerful male rulers, must have posed a challenge. It would be interesting to sit with her to understand how she worked her system, her leadership and also kept her space in those times: a seemingly unique way of leadership, fearless and "modern!" Her beauty and the sense of style she demonstrated seem exquisite to me.



Inspiration from the USA: Printer



My name is Myra Walman and I am a member of FAUSA, the alumnae arm of FAWCO based in the US. My first FAWCO experience was the conference in Mumbai, India in April!

Originally I am from Windsor Ontario, Canada but currently I live in Detroit Michigan.

My journey has probably been a bit backwards from the typical FAUSA member, because I began as a Canadian, and ended up as a US citizen as well. After completing my undergraduate business degree in 1979, I was recruited by General Motors, Canada. However, through a government grant, established to encourage diversification from the automotive industry, a local printer offered to pay for my MBA if I were to work for his printing company. I left GM after working for just over a year. I learned about the printing industry while working on my MBA and was eventually recruited by a US printing company, who offered me a Green Card. I was given the opportunity to live and work in Detroit. Here amongst Detroiters, I fell in love with the city. Detroit may have a bad reputation, but it is primarily from those who don't even give it a chance. I eventually decided to change

my Green Card status and become a US citizen.

In their twenties, my parents moved from Toronto to Windsor, Ontario to run a local tavern which was historically linked to the Underground Railroad as well as to alcohol smuggling during Prohibition. When I was tall enough to reach the industrial kitchen sinks in the tavern, I worked washing dishes with my older brother on weekends. Growing up in the hospitality industry, taught me the basic values of service. Observing kindness and compassion while watching my father's dealings with his staff and patrons, as well as being around the myriad charitable organizations my mother served in, I learned about the joys of involvement that results from being of service to others. That is the feeling that drew me to FAUSA and eventually to the FAWCO conference in India. Seeing the passion that the members have for improving the lives of others has been an inspiration.

In the early 1980s, design in the graphics industry was much more labor-intensive. Today most printing can be achieved by the push of a button. When I began, you could not even see what you were typesetting. Words were typed into a machine and you would have to make a proof in order to see if what you typed was accurate or correctly positioned. In order to print pictures, a physical picture of an image was made and would need to be separated into four different color negatives. Each would need to be precisely placed onto sheets with other negatives that contained the type (words). The negatives would be burned onto plates that were bolted onto cylinders on the press. Manually, it would take hours to change plates from one printing job to the next. Now, with the help of computers and the Internet, anyone can download accurate templates in the comfort of their own home and create a newsletter. With the click of a button, a file can be sent to a printer that prints out a full-color newsletter. Even in a commercial printing facility now, someone in the typesetting department can create images

on the screen and instantaneously send files to a press that has ink automatically flowing into it, while the plates, which no longer need to be burned manually, automatically go into the press and lock themselves into place. With the click of a button, the machine will electronically know how much ink to flow to the press in the right spots to achieve the best image, and the paper will come out cut down - and in some instances, be folded, glued or stitched into a booklet, ready to be inserted into cartons for shipping.

GETTING TO KNOW MYRA

Describe your ideal day: I would be somewhere in the south of France, starting my day off with a morning walk to yoga class. Afterwards, I would meet friends for an espresso and a deliciously healthy breakfast. I would then find a friend to assist in some way, or put in some volunteer hours somewhere. It could involve traveling, hopefully taking a new train route, while exploring new scenery and meeting new people. I would want to be back in time for a glass of fine wine at dinner with family and friends. In the evening, I would end up curled up in front of a fireplace with a good book.

Which book you've read recently would you recommend? I recently listened to a book on tape called *Shantaram*, written in 2002 by Gregory David. It is his fascinating story about how he escaped from Australia and hid out in India for years. The book's compelling story, following his journey from when he first landed in Bombay until the day he left India, inspired me to want to see India for myself. I hoped to meet some wonderfully kind and companionate people of India, like the ones he wrote about. I hoped to taste the foods and see the landscapes he described. The love he expressed through his story, especially for the people of the slums, made me want to tour all aspects of India. And I must say, I am grateful for the FAWCO conference in Mumbai, which gave me the opportunity to do just that. And I was not disappointed. In fact, I hope to return to India someday to explore even more to the south of Mumbai.

Of all the people you have met in your life, who do you admire most? Gwen Rapoport is an extraordinary American woman whom I greatly admire. It was serendipitous how we met. I was in my first year of university when I was diagnosed with dyslexia. Shortly after, while mentoring some teens at a community

center in Windsor, I met a man who recommended that I call Gwen when he found out that I was encouraged to drop out of university because of my diagnoses. He knew that Gwen, his neighbor from when he lived in Toronto, had worked with children with learning difficulties. When I called Gwen to see if she could possibly help me, she said without a moment's hesitation that if she could, she would. In fact, she invited me to her home in Toronto to tutor me before she was to leave for Vienna, where she and her husband Anatole would continue to spend the summers. Not only did she refuse to take any remuneration for her help - and she helped me throughout my undergraduate work as well as my MBA - she offered to tutor me in Vienna that summer if I could find my way there. And that I did.

When Gwen picked me up at the bus station, for my first tutoring session in Toronto, her first words to me were "Oh Myra, I'm so glad to meet you... You are going to write a book one day." I thought she was delusional. All I could think about, as I continued stepping down from that bus, was about being told that my reading skills were at a grade 4 level, my writing skills were grade 3, and that there was no cure for dyslexia and that I should consider dropping out of university. And little did I know that this woman would change the course of my life in such a way



that I would end up with a graduate degree, a career in the printing industry and the ability to articulate my thoughts on paper for this magazine article.

It was the beginning of a lifelong friendship. I now consider the Rapoport to be my second family, and any chance I get, I spend time with Gwen. This year we celebrated her 96th birthday. Her life is so fascinating.

If you could meet one famous or influential woman, alive or dead, who would it be and why? Eleanor Roosevelt has to be one of the most influential women in history for reasons that may not be obvious to most; however to me, she did more to change the landscape of America in her quiet and behind-the-scenes approach to leadership. Most people see only the visible, outwardly political



accomplishments she and her husband managed to make happen. However for me, as a gay American, in the era of Ellen DeGeneres and Barack Obama, I can only imagine and try to empathize with the subtleties in which she lived her life,

quietly making the White House more inclusive. One of the interesting anomalies about coming out gay in America is that (and especially in Eleanor's time), being in the closet forces people of different classes, religions ethnic backgrounds and colors to come together to support one another in ways that normally, these differences would never allow their paths to cross. Eleanor's circle of friends and influence included women of color and women from different walks of life, whom she welcomed into the White House.

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Designing a Woman's Life



Jane Mobbille a Professional Certified Life Coach, talks to us about designing a woman's life....

Like many children in late-1960s America, I was a library rat, either checking books out of the library, or bringing them back

- overdue. What I especially liked to pull off the shelves were biographies of American women written for young readers. I still remember their names: Clara Barton, Lucretia Mott, Amelia Earhart, Annie Oakley, Dorothea Dix, Babe Didrikson, and Jane Addams. Through their lives, I learned about the history of my country. I admired these women for what they accomplished – they were pioneers, and I cheered them on. As a girl, their independence reassured me, for they showed me that being a woman was not a limitation; on the contrary. Perhaps most importantly, by reading their inspiring stories, I was hoping to appropriate their values: things like ambition, contribution, joy, perseverance, courage and integrity. I doubted that anyone would ever write my biography – that wasn't the point. Rather, there was something in the spirit of these women that attracted me. Spirit comes from the Latin *spiritus*, which means "breath." These extraordinary women managed to design fulfilling and impactful lives with each and every breath they took.

Today I am a life coach who works with

"regular" women. It is my honor to accompany them in their quest to design fulfilling and impactful lives. If it could only be as simple as reading the biography of an extraordinary woman and appropriating her values! First, what are values? According to *The Coaches Training Institute*: "Values are principles that we hold to be of worth in our lives. When our lives are aligned with our values, we feel both grounded and alive. We don't choose our values; they are intrinsic to each of us." So part of a woman's quest is to be able to express her values each day. The rest involves what I call the "fantastic intersection" – that place where experience, strength, vision, and passion meet; and where fulfillment and impact are optimized. Yes! Show me a woman who has designed her life at this intersection, and I will show you a woman who is fulfilled and making an impact.

Designing Mary

If you ever get to meet Mary, ask her to recite a passage from Shakespeare, or to sing a verse of Bob Dylan. When you applaud, she will bow her head in acknowledgment, even as her face breaks into a smile. She longs to run in the woods each weekend, but makes it just once a month.

She lights a daily candle to make her home feel cozy, and she is sure to ask her children a question about the natural world after dinner, often leading to an on-the-spot Internet search, snuggled together in one of their beds, with her



husband joining them. She studied French literature and environmental science and works in renewable energy. Ask her about herself, and she responds, "I help lower carbon emissions one ton at a time. I am happy with my life and the beautiful people in it."

So what might be Mary's values? We could guess that beauty, contribution, achievement, and learning are among them. What about her fantastic intersection? Her job in Brussels allows her to exercise her experience (science and French) and a few of her strengths (analysis and organization). Her vision is to save the planet, and to enjoy the beautiful people in her life. Passion is tied to one's values. Mary expresses beauty when she recites poetry or lights a candle. As concerns her value around learning, it so happens that she is pursuing a Master degree.

So is Mary living life at her fantastic intersection? She is close, but, alas, she is not fully aligned with her vision. Mary would say that she never has enough time for her children and husband. "Needs" – often the hardest hurdle to overcome – are keeping her from this. Needs are reality, like having enough money to pay your rent. Needs can mean being afraid, and over-compensating, to stay safe. Needs can even lead to selfishness. Mary works at home on weekends. I asked her, "What are you getting from that?" She had a hard time answering me. Then she admitted it has something to do with wanting to be the best

– a personal need and not a requirement to succeed at her job. I asked her, "By saying yes to working on your weekend, what are you saying no to?" She knew the answer clear as day – she was saying no to enjoying the beautiful people in her life.



Intentional choices

What can we learn from Clara, Lucretia, Amelia, Annie, Dorothea, Babe, and Jane – all of whom arguably lived their lives at the fantastic intersection? Our heroines could tell a real need from a "needy" need, and each possessed the conviction to resist the trap. Precociously wise, they knew that they were always "at choice." Rarely able to have it "both ways," they knew that the next best thing is to make an intentional choice. And this they did – over and over again. Like our heroines, the most important thing a "regular" woman must do in order to arrive at that fantastic intersection is to ask constantly, "What is this behavior or action giving me? What am I foregoing?" Only with these answers will she be able to make her choices with intention.

The woman who lives an intentional life will arrive, sooner rather than later, at the fantastic intersection. And this, my friends, is the secret to designing that fulfilling and impactful life that, really, all of us wish for.

Jane Mobile is a Professional Certified Coach (PCC) based in Paris, France. She works at Kedge Global Executive MBA as an executive coach. In addition, Jane runs her own coaching practice for clients representing a diversity of ages, cultures, and professions. A member of AAWE (Association of American Women in Europe), Jane is the editor of its quarterly magazine. She also authors a *Teen Coach* column at the online magazine INSPIRELLE. Jane and her French husband have a 23-year-old daughter, and two teenage sons.

Inspiration from Germany: Architect



My name is Sabrina Lupero-Reichert and I am a member of the American International Women's Club of Cologne, Germany. I am a club Charities Board Member, and in addition my family and I love to attend the wonderful family Christmas and Halloween parties.

I was born in Brooklyn, NY and raised in Princeton, NJ, USA. I graduated from Stuart Country Day School of the Sacred Heart in Princeton, NJ, then Hobart and William Smith Colleges in Geneva, NY, where I studied Pre-Architecture in a liberal arts environment, played lacrosse, field hockey and ice hockey. Upon receiving my diploma from HWS, I attended a 3+4 program with Washington University in St. Louis to pursue a Masters of Architecture degree.

I followed my passion for art and architecture, studying abroad my junior year in Florence, Italy with Syracuse University's Pre-Architecture DIPA program, then in Barcelona, Spain for a summer semester with Washington University in St. Louis's Architecture School.

After completing my Master's Degree, I moved to San Francisco, CA and worked as a landscape architect with the SWA Group. The projects varied in scale and location from campuses throughout Silicon Valley, a cemetery designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, a house in NY and many other beautiful opportunities to work with a wonderful team of people.

Afterwards, I moved to Santa Monica, CA and returned to architecture by accepting a job with Frank Gehry Partners, where I again worked on teams with wonderfully talented people and exciting projects primarily located in New York, NY, with the last project being 8 Spruce Street, Beekman Tower.

After Gehry, I wanted to explore other areas of the architecture process and learn a new skill set with Jones Lang LaSalle, and I accepted a project manager position that focused on and taught me the practical elements of maintaining a team, budget, scope and schedule from design through construction for a myriad of projects in the Los Angeles area. After some time, I transferred back to New York with JLL, where I continued to focus on Real Estate Development Project Management for commercial and cultural institutions while dabbling in photography and maintaining a creative side personally.

Following JLL, I worked with the Jonathan Rose Companies, focusing on only not-for-profit cultural institutions. This was an incredible experience to help them realize their built dreams while learning and being inspired by Jonathan Rose.

Eventually, in 2009, I took a full time break to have my beautiful children, but remained active in doing my own residential projects in New York and working part time for a Spanish firm, OAB, who aimed to open an office there. We moved to Cologne, Germany in 2014. In the last 2+ years, I have organized life for the three kids, obtained my German driver's license, received my Italian passport, completed the B1 language level and the *Orientierungskurs* (orientation course for foreign residents in Germany), made new friends and joined the AIWCC, which has been a wonderful investment and critical part of making Cologne a success for me and my family.



In October 2016, I returned to work part time at JLL in Düsseldorf and Cologne. I am grateful to have the opportunity to experience the German office culture and learn as much as I can about doing real estate development projects here. It seems to be a more traditional office environment, and I have many challenges to work and learn the language and to educate myself within the fields of architecture and construction in Germany. I am very ambitious and self-motivated, which helps maintain my focus and hopefully someday meet my professional goals, while maintaining my dignity and confidence in an environment, which is not familiar to me.

My husband is German, and he is an incredible life partner and constant patient support to me as I make my way through the daily obstacles of living abroad with a family. We met while we were students in Barcelona, Spain in 1999. In 2005 Christoph moved to New York, and our relationship developed; we eventually married and had three children there.

I believe that my 20s were for studying, my 30s were for creating my beautiful family, and now my 40s are for getting my career back on track. In the next 10 years, I would like to obtain my AIA (American Institute of Architects) license and become a registered architect in Germany as well. I would also like to find a dream residential project to renovate and call my own someday. Although my path has not been a traditional one, I'm proud that I had the courage to step outside the box of architecture to learn new skill sets, and to realize other avenues within the profession that provide interesting results as well as to maintain a family.

GETTING TO KNOW SABRINA

What 5 words would you use to describe yourself at your best/worst? Best: social, open-minded, empathetic, creative, thoughtful,

generous.
Worst: stressed, too hard on myself, perfectionist.

Describe your ideal day. Yoga in Santa



Monica, CA, coffee at Emma's in Cologne, family afternoon at the beach in Apuglia, tennis with my husband, bike ride with my children, reading, writing, photographing, watching the pink sunset in Southampton, NY, eating quahog chowder for dinner on Nantucket Island, drinks with friends on a rooftop in NYC. All in one amazing day!

If you became president or leader of a either your home country or host country for a day, what would you do/change?

I would make all museums free to the public or on a donation basis.

If you could do any job in the world for one day, what would it be and why?

I would want to be a film director so that I could make cinematic experiences come to life!

If you could meet one famous or influential woman, alive or dead who would it be and why?

My great-grandmother, Lucia, whom I never met: she immigrated from Italy to NYC in the 1900s as a widow with five



children. She seems incredibly ambitious and strong to leave one country and move to the next without knowing the language and while being responsible for the family.

Inspiration from Antigua: Interior Designer



My name is Cheryl Anne Adams and I am president of the International Women's Club of Antigua and Barbuda, a post I have held for the past seven years.

www.iwcantiguabarbuda.org.

Our club celebrated its 30-year anniversary in December 2016 and has approximately 66 members from all over the world. We have regular guest lecturers, wine tastings and other meetings throughout the year, as well as our Annual Golf Tournament which raised \$27,000 for our Scholarship Awards for Women in 2016.

I am from the United Kingdom but have divided my time between the UK and Antigua for the last 11 years.

Before I became involved in Antigua, I was a sales



manager for a fashion company for 12 years, balancing an exciting and rewarding career with also being a mother.

I am married with two children. My son Ashley, is a freelance cameraman in film and television and my daughter Lucy is head of events with a top London company. They both live with their families in London.

My husband Howard and I have been working in property development since we moved to

Antigua. Our clients are mainly British, and they leave the build and interior design to us. My husband looks after the construction side of each project, while I oversee the interior design of the villas and landscaping.

In 2006, we purchased land in Antigua and built three villas and four apartments in the Caribbean style. A few years later, we started a new project of five properties overlooking the beautiful Caribbean Sea near Darkwood Beach.

The properties are individually owned, and we work with our clients to achieve a design that meets their expectations and ambitions for a home in paradise. We have two plots left to sell and construct upon. When completed, we rent most of the villas out on a short-term holiday basis on behalf of the owners as well as managing the properties for them.

So our company designs, builds and project manages, and I am very involved with the interior design and landscaping of each property. I think that making a success of starting a whole new life for us in Antigua in our 60s is probably the single most important achievement of my life.



GETTING TO KNOW CHERYL

What 5 words would you use to describe yourself at your best/worst?

I believe others and myself can describe my best attributes as supportive, enthusiastic, loyal, caring, and hard-working. When I am not at my best I can be intolerant, opinionated and sleepy.

Describe your ideal day: My ideal day would be in Antigua and would consist of lunch and shopping with some girlfriends, a game of golf with my husband and an early night after a couple of rum and gingers.

If you could start all over again in any city or country, which one would it be and why? If I could start all over again I wouldn't choose anywhere else but Antigua: I would have just moved there sooner!

If you were moving back to your home country what would you miss most about your host country? If I had to leave Antigua for good, I would miss the fabulously varied and hectic island social life, the warmth, and the wonderful turquoise sea.

What things do you miss most about your home country? The things I miss when I am away from the UK are my family and friends, tasty local white crabmeat and being able to fill up the kettle from the faucet.

Which book or film that you've seen recently would you recommend? The book I enjoyed most in recent times is *The Pirate's Daughter* by Margaret Cezair-Thompson because it captures the spirit of Caribbean life in the mid-twentieth century as told by a local woman caught up in a fascinating Hollywood fantasy.

If you became president or leader of either your home country or host country for a day, what would you do/change? In the unlikely

event that I was elected Prime Minister of Antigua for a day, my most important edict would be to switch off all the lights for the evening so that everyone could once again enjoy the beauty of the thousands of stars to be seen at night.

If you could do any job in the world for one day, what would it be? If being Prime Minister of Antigua proved so successful that I was offered the opportunity to do a special job for just one day, then I would probably opt for President of the European Union so that I could knock some sense into a lot of wooden and stubborn heads.

Of all the people you have met in your life, who do you admire most? Of the people I have met, the person who I most admire is Agnes Meaker because of the incredible lengths she has gone to establishing the St John's Hospice in Antigua. <https://www.stjohninternational.org/antigua-barbuda>

If you could meet one famous or influential woman, alive or dead who would it be and why? The woman I would most like to meet is Victoria Beckham. I admire her creative and design talent, her ability to reinvent herself and the way she copes with celebrity. I am sure she would be fascinating to talk with.



Regional Inspiration: Region 9



Region 9 is the Middle East from Lebanon to the Arabian Gulf. There are two official FAWCO clubs (AWC Lebanon and American Women of Eastern Province, Saudi Arabia) and a growing number of individual FAWCO members from Bahrain, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Qatar, Kuwait and parts of Saudi Arabia where FAWCO clubs are not available. Many women want to be connected globally and we are thrilled that as more individuals join, they are also joining together locally and creating informal groups for coffee and global conversations

My name is Louise Greeley-Copley. I have lived overseas on and off for most of my 35 years of married life, although I was born in upstate New York. I am the Regional Coordinator for Region 9 and I currently live out of a suitcase (honestly) between Saudi Arabia and Houston, with frequent stops to see family and friends in Ireland, London, Los Angeles and Santa Fe. The longest I have lived in one place was 12 happy years in Long Beach, CA. We have moved 23 times in the last 35 years living in the USA, Sultanate of Oman, Dubai and Sharjah UAE, Trinidad and Tobago, USA, England, USA and Saudi Arabia with extended periods in Ireland and Bahrain. I have also spent long periods of time in Miami, Houston, Denver, Los Angeles, Europe, Thailand, China – Hong Kong and Beijing, and the Caribbean. My husband, Brian, and I have two children in their 20s who were born in California, raised in England until they were 11 and 13, and attended high school in Houston. As third culture kids, they have travelled the world, both with us and independently.

I have degrees in Buying and Merchandising,



and International Marketing, and certifications in Travel and Meeting and Event Planning. I have held a wide variety of occupations including: dance teacher, fashion model, fashion coordinator, researcher in a public relations department, and in the travel industry as a meeting, event and incentive planner.

I left corporate life abruptly when an accident and long rehabilitation led me on a painful journey that left me permanently disabled and unable to perform full-time work. That resulted in a major rebranding from the corporate world of productivity and profits to philanthropy, non-profit, civic and humanitarian projects. I turned my attentions to volunteering in community organizations where I could contribute as my condition allowed. My disability forced me to slow down and think more about people. I have been the recipient of much kindness and I always vow to pay it forward.

Over the years I have had numerous local club (FAWCO Rep), FAWCO (both FAWCO Board and Foundation Board) and FAUSA positions. As then FAUSA President, I helped host the 2010 FAWCO conference in Boston. Currently I am a member of FAUSA, the FAWCO USA alumnae group. I also participate in American Women of Eastern Province, when I am in Saudi Arabia, or the American Women of Bahrain gatherings. I have been the RC for three years and spend my time communicating with club presidents, reps and individuals in our area on FAWCO initiatives, offering advice on organizational issues, researching regional issues and potential projects, and organizing regional meetings. I also do my best to make sure our members projects and passions are recognized.



In 2014 I helped organize a Region 9 conference in Amman, Jordan. The theme was: *The Displacement Dilemma: Focus on Compassion, Friendship, Peace and Expats sharing experiences*. It was about the refugee crisis. We had a great panel of NGOs in the region, arranged by Therese Hartwell, and a volunteer project with Collateral Repair Project CRP (the current Target Project). I also debuted the Personal Displacement workshop in Amman, which we further developed for the Mumbai 2017 FAWCO Conference .

Like many regions across FAWCO, our region's members are very generous with their time and financial support of local organizations, club member's chosen charities, the FAWCO Target programs and the FAWCO Foundation Development Grants. There were 12 attendees at the FAWCO Symposium: STAND UP Against Human Trafficking from Region 9 in October 2016.



For me, FAWCO represents a global connection and a network of passionate and curious friends. FAWCO has given me the opportunity to engage with and write about human rights, the environment, health, cultural issues, travel, education, equality, fairness and, most importantly, humanitarian projects. I enjoy the social and cultural life of a club but truly appreciate and value the ability FAWCO gives me to be a global citizen.

Region 9 is an interesting area. Many people in the western world still have a view of the Middle East that it is just sand, camels and Bedouins roaming the desert. But that has long changed. Now there are cities that are ultramodern. The Middle East is conservative in some ways; you are expected to dress accordingly. Mostly that means covering your arms and legs in public. Only in Saudi are women expected to wear an Abaya, a long-sleeved, full-length, black robe. In the last two years, it is more common to see abayas that are more colorful and sometimes full of bling.

In most countries here, you will hear the Adhan (*Call to Prayer*) five times a day from the mosques. In Saudi Arabia most shops close during prayer times; in other countries businesses remain open. Alcohol is forbidden in Saudi. In Lebanon and Jordan you will find local wine.

Visitors to the Middle East can enjoy skiing in Lebanon, dune sledding in the UAE and Saudi Arabia, wadi bashing in the Sultanate of Oman or scuba diving. The sleek, modern cities of Bahrain, Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Doha offer art, cultural activities and history. The cities are full of stunning skyscrapers, museums, forts, shopping malls with theme parks, state of the art medical facilities, beautiful mosques, great food and a vibrant social scene. My favorite is the Sultanate of Oman with its opera house, old town souk, corniche, beautiful beach resorts of Muscat and the views from Jebel Akhdar.



I would encourage everyone to visit the Middle East, especially during the cooler months of November through May. You will find friendly, family-loving people, gorgeous food, activities for everyone and fun shopping.

Come and visit us soon!

GETTING TO KNOW LOUISE

Describe your ideal day. I am torn between a beach and a city. It could be Paris, London, Istanbul, Edinburgh, Santa Fe, Florence or Muscat...anywhere. It would be with my husband, Brian, and children, Shannon and Kieran. We would spend a day exploring the city markets, museums and hidden places, then gather in the evening to enjoy fresh beautifully prepared food with drinks and live music. Perhaps we would go to a concert or we would just sit and talk, laugh and enjoy each other's company.

Which book or film that you've seen recently would you recommend? *An Unnecessary Woman* by Rabih al Ameddine. I love the way this author paints a picture of a woman and a city in turmoil (Beirut, Lebanon) and how they each cope. There are many parallels in this tale to how people and societies in general think of each other. Aaliya makes assumptions about her neighbours and they about her, putting distance between them. This is a novel that has humor, sadness and compassion. This book makes many references to classical literature, history and music. One of my friends

in Houston compiled a playlist of music referred to in the book and that list now provides me with nine hours of listening pleasure.

Of all the people you have met in your life, whom do you admire most? I have had the privilege to meet so many dedicated, inspiring, thoughtful people that are all creative: writers, dancers, musicians, artists, doctors, engineers, teachers and everyday heroes. I admire people for many reasons: their kindness, commitment, enthusiasm, diligence, passion, humor, communication skills and ability to solve problems. I think different people have an impact on us in different stages of our lives.

I truly love spending time with my Aunt Bunny Tobias and Uncle Charles Greeley. They are artists who have been making a life from one creative project to the next for over 50 years. I enjoy their art and how they have reinvented or rebranded themselves over the years through a diversity of artistic mediums. Bunny and Charles encourage and mentor fellow artists with great generosity. They both truly embody the adage, "Do what you love."



If you could meet one famous or influential woman, alive or dead, who would it be and why? Mary Robinson was Ireland's first woman president from 1990-1997; she was then appointed as the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights from 1997-2002. I admire President Robinson's work as she is an inclusive and compassionate leader. She now leads the Mary Robinson Foundation – Climate Justice. Her work not only challenged and changed Ireland, but also brought Human Rights to the forefront of the United Nations. She is also from my mother's hometown of Ballina, Ireland.



Two Recipes to Inspire You from Region 9



Here are two recipes that are typical throughout the Middle East. Each country has their own variation and each household has its favorites!

Za'atar

Za'atar is a Middle East Staple: can be dusted on pastries, mixed with olive oil and slathered on flat bread or crackers or served with cheese. It makes a great Arabic pizza (called Manouseh or Mana'eesh). Sprinkle on salads, baked potatoes, roasted vegetables and yoghurt. Rub a chicken or fish with this aromatic herbal mixture.

Basic Za'atar:

- 1 cup of dried thyme (please use wild or organic if possible)
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of sesame seeds
- 1-2 teaspoons of sea salt
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of ground sumac

Optional:

- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of dried oregano or marjoram
- $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 teaspoon of any of the following to taste: cumin, cinnamon, coriander, ground fennel

To use as a paste: mix 2 teaspoons of Za'atar with 2-3 teaspoons of good olive oil.



Mouffabal from Jordan:

The base of this dip is aubergine or eggplant. It is roasted to get a smoky flavor. Every country has its own version. This recipe has yoghurt. While you might also see recipes for Baba Ghanoush, which is similar, but without tahini or yoghurt.

- 1 large or 2 medium aubergine/eggplant
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 or 2 cloves of garlic, mashed
- $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ cups tahini paste (sesame paste)
- Juice of $\frac{1}{2}$ -1 lemon
- 2-3 tablespoons of yoghurt (use a good thick plain yoghurt)
- pinch of sea salt
- Garnishes: sumac, pomegranate seeds, parsley or mint and olive oil

Rinse eggplant, then roast it whole on a grill or gas stovetop until the eggplant starts to collapse. Or alternatively, cut it in half, brush with olive oil and roast, cut side down, in a pre-heated 450F (230C) oven for 20-30 minutes.

Let the eggplant rest for 20-30 minutes, then scoop out the flesh. Add garlic, lemon juice, tahini, yoghurt and salt to taste. Mash or use a food processor to blend the ingredients. Serve in a shallow bowl garnished with a drizzle of olive oil, pomegranate seeds and sumac (optional) with crackers or flatbread. Serves 4-6



IS BASIC HEALTH IMPORTANT TO YOU?

**Are we living with problems related to
fatigue, stress, and discomfort?**

***Even though we do our best
to take care of ourselves, we sometimes
need additional help.***



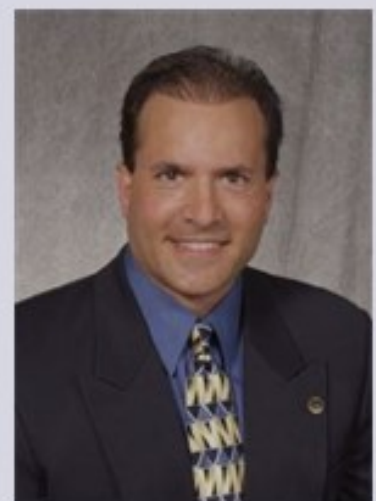
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Inspiration from Ireland: Web Designer



My name is NgocDzung Nguyen Smith and I have been a member of the American Women's Club of Dublin, Ireland since 2013. When we first arrived in Dublin and my youngest child was a toddler, I enjoyed going to the weekly Coffee and Kids meetups. It was a wonderful way to meet other members. Over the years, I've enjoyed many of the club's social activities from Girls' Night Out to Afternoon Teas to Sunday Brunch. As a volunteer, I designed the invitation and related materials for our club's Spring Gala in 2016.

I grew up in a small rural town in Michigan. Since college, I've lived in Florida, South Carolina and most recently in the Seattle, Washington area before our family moved to Dublin.

Living overseas was the culmination of a lifelong dream for both my husband and me. Growing up, I always dreamed of what else might be outside that small town and about seeing the things I read about in books or saw in movies. After a short stint in

the US Navy, I was living in Charleston, South Carolina in 1999 when I met my husband, Jason. Five years later, we just quit our jobs one day; a couple of weeks later, we packed up our cars and moved to Seattle, Washington. We just thought if not now, then when?

Over the years, I had always found ways to segue my design and art skills into whatever job in which I was working. In Charleston, I worked in marketing but when we arrived in Seattle, I started a small design business and worked with many local small businesses and organizations. I also worked as an online marketer and designer, keeping my business on the side. But my business grew as my family grew. As I added designers, I also added babies: three in three years (insane, I know! Now they are 12, 11, and 9). After our second baby, I left my job and started to work solely from home. Those years were a blur as I stayed up all night with babies and worked to meet deadlines, but I'm very proud of the impact of the work of my design team.

When I got pregnant with my fourth child (now five years old), I decided to take a work break to enjoy time with this last baby. While I was enjoying the maternity time, my husband was offered a position in Dublin. Six months later, we were in standing in Dublin airport - having rented out our house, sold most of our furniture and put the rest into storage, and moved with our four small children overseas with one suitcase and a backpack each.

We've been in Dublin for four years now and my year off with my baby has turned into five years! I don't have a visa to work in my host country, but I have done pro-bono work providing logo and brand development, websites and special event materials for entrepreneurial friends, the AWCD and the International Women's Club of Dublin.

My work in the design field has been fluid and I've adapted it to the changing needs of both myself and my family. I'm lucky to work in a field that can easily support remote and contract work so that I have maximum versatility when I need it. I also enjoy the creative outlet it provides. I'd like to go back to work eventually but I'm not sure in what field; maybe illustration and painting next.



GETTING TO KNOW NGOCDZUNG

What 5 words would you use to describe yourself at your best/worst? Worst: my husband said this sounded like a trap when I asked him. How am I when less than my best? I'll never tell! I like to think positively!

Describe your ideal day. My ideal day would be waking up early and enjoying a lovely breakfast before setting out for an interesting day - exploring a new city, taking an interesting hike or sampling new and interesting foods. That would be my plan for an ideal day. I'd love to squeeze in a stop for

ice cream somewhere! My favorite days are always with my family (although don't tell them this - I wouldn't get my day off on Mother's Day otherwise! :)

If you could start all over again in any city or country, which one would it be and why? We have had such a great experience moving overseas to Ireland that we would love to try a non-English speaking country. My husband votes for Japan but I am actually really open to most places.

Which book that you've read recently would you recommend? *The Dressmaker* by Rosalie

Hamm. I loved the crisp, succinct prose and the vivid world she creates. I love making things myself. So, I especially enjoyed how Tilly, the protagonist, makes these amazing fabric creations that transform the people who wear them.

If you became president or leader of either your home country or host country for a day, what would you do/change? That's a tough one. I wish I had an answer for this. Encourage people to be more tolerant and embrace change...?



Inspiration from the FAWCO Foundation



My name is Liz Janson. I grew up mostly in southern and central Indiana, left home when I was 18, and since then have lived in five states and four countries. I moved back to the US "permanently" from Munich, Germany in January, 2017 and currently live in beautiful Boulder, Colorado.

I lived in Moscow, USSR, for a year in the mid-1970s, Munich, Germany for three years in the 1990s, and most recently in Cambridge, England; Shanghai, China; and Munich, Germany for the past 12 years. I've been an art educator/docent in several museums in various cities, as well as volunteering for organizations relating to students and communities wherever we've lived.

My husband and I, and our three adult sons, now all live in the US for the first time in many years. There were two years where we all had different country codes for our mobile phones: Austria, Germany, US, Kenya and Granada! My husband, Eric, retired



at the end of 2016 and we are so fortunate to be able to gather together frequently with our family in various combinations and places.

While I was in Munich I served as Munich International Women's Club President from 2013-2015. While in Germany, I also served as part of the club activities team (worked with the coordinators of the 22+ separate monthly activities), nominations team, as FAWCO Rep, and on the Newsletter team. From 2015-2017, I held the position of Secretary on The FAWCO Foundation Board.

The FAWCO Foundation is FAWCO's philanthropic sister organization. It raises and disburses funds for Development Grants, Educational Awards and the Target Project.

<http://www.fawcofoundation.org/> Did you know The FAWCO Foundation is celebrating 50 years of commitment to philanthropy in 2017? In 1968, our very first contribution was \$200. Today we raise many thousands of dollars every year.

In my role as Secretary, I advocated for the Board's migration to the Foundation-owned cloud-based platform for communications and collaborative sharing. This centralization of current and archived information protects the organization's access to, and control of, its data. It's been very exciting to learn about and help implement this important next step for The FAWCO Foundation.

I have recently accepted the temporary role as lead on the newly-formed FAWCO Foundation Archives team. We completed scanning boxes (and boxes!) of paper archives during my term as Secretary and now face the task of organizing and naming them so they're readily accessible for research and historical background.

For me being a part of FAWCO means being a member of an international organization of passionate and professional women. The opportunities to learn and give back are limited only to one's interests and time, be it taking a role in the organization itself (or sister organizations), or applying for a Development Grant for a worthy project in one's own local or world community.

Alongside my work with FAWCO, I am a creator and maker of knit wire jewelry <http://lizbjanson.com/>. Over the past few years, I've donated many pieces to FAWCO auctions, including a custom-designed gold wire and feather pearl necklace for the Live Auction at the



2015 Frankfurt Interim Conference. My designs use a variety of knitting techniques and materials, incorporating freshwater pearls, sea glass, beads and small objects collected from around the world...most recently garnet beads bought from a street vendor in India during the FAWCO post-conference tour!



GETTING TO KNOW LIZ

If you could start all over again in any city or country, which one would it be and why?

I'm getting to do that right now! My husband and I fell in love with Boulder when we visited our son at the University of Colorado in 2006. It is a lovely university town at the intersection of the high plains and the Rocky Mountains. People take their outdoor pursuits, food and beer very seriously! There are over 50 breweries and 150 miles of trails within the city limits of Boulder. We are currently very involved in building our dream house at the foot of the mountains.

If you could meet one famous or influential woman, alive or dead who would it be and why?

Elizabeth Zimmermann was a groundbreaking knitter-artist, craftswoman, author and philosopher. Her knitting philosophy was to provide the tools to create a sweater, socks, scarf, etc. without a specific pattern; her life philosophy revolved around tolerance and openness to life's experiences...another way of looking at life without the confines of a specific pattern!

She felt very strongly about the importance of

travel and experience in creating understanding of other countries and cultures, a guiding principal of FAWCO and The FAWCO Foundation in their support of Educational Awards for members, their children and grandchildren. In the conclusion of her knitting-based autobiography, *Knitting Around*, she wrote about this concept: "The only way I can see this done is to have our children so mixed around the globe, that they can learn, and also prove to others, that all people are alike, good and bad mixed."

Elizabeth Zimmermann had a full-page obituary in the New York Times when she died.

If you became president or leader of either your home country or host country for a day, what would you do/change?

As leader of the WORLD, I would make free birth control education and birth control methods available to all people through schools, clinics, public service announcements and media. All women have the right to make their own decisions about their bodies.



How Can You Get Involved?

The next *Inspiring Women* will be available in September. The theme of our fall edition will be Educating Women - women in the world of education whether teacher, administrator, lecturer etc.

As in this edition, we would like to feature profiles of some of the wonderful women across the FAWCO world. If you know anyone in this field who has done something of particular interest and would make a good profile please contact the editor by **July 15, 2017**.

We would also like to feature cover photos taken by FAWCO members - that means you! The photo theme should be Educating Women

Photos must be :

PORTRAIT orientation (landscape photos cannot be accepted),

Digital and Color, 150-300 dpi quality and 5-10 MB max.,

Taken by a FAWCO member with details of where and when the photo was taken.

Deadline for submission: August 28, 2017

N.B. Photos will be credited but no payment for their use is possible.

MAGAZINE FEEDBACK

We want this magazine to be interesting for all FAWCO members. In an effort to provide articles of interest to all of our readers, we have created an online feedback questionnaire. It should only take a few minutes of your time to complete and will be a great help to us!

Please click on the link or paste it into your browser
to complete the survey.

<https://goo.gl/wvc536>

Thanks very much indeed!

Inspiring You

Founded in 1931, FAWCO is a global women's NGO (Non-Governmental Organization), an international network of independent volunteer clubs and associations comprising 65 member clubs in 34 countries worldwide, with a total membership of around 12,000. FAWCO serves as a resource and a voice for its members; seeks to improve the lives of women and girls worldwide, especially in the areas of human rights, health, education and the environment; advocates for the rights of US citizens overseas; and contributes to the global community through its Global Issues Teams and The FAWCO Foundation, which provides development grants and education awards. Since 1997, FAWCO has held special consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

FAWCO is an international federation of independent organizations whose mission is

- **to build strong support networks for its American and international membership;**
- **to improve the lives of women and girls worldwide;**
- **to advocate for the rights of US citizens overseas; and**
- **to mobilize the skills of its membership in support of global initiatives for education, the environment, health and human rights.**

For more information about this magazine please contact: **Inspiring Women Editor in Chief:** Liz MacNiven, inspiringwomen.editor@fawco.org

For more information on how to advertise in this magazine, please contact: **FAWCO Advertising and Sponsorship Manager:** Elsie Bose, advertising@fawco.org



Liz and Elsie at the Mumbai Conference

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Thanks also to the cover photo artist Clydette de Groot (AWG Paris). Clydette says "I was savouring the pristine sky and sweet smell of a quiet morning walk, one I had taken many times, along Lac Lemman in Montreux, Switzerland. Suddenly she appeared! Her silhouetted energy loomed large against the stillness of the water; I stopped to capture the vitality. It was early July and jazz season, a time when sculpture pops up in unexpected places and open spaces become musical stages. Her joie de vivre was contagious. I smiled and my step quickened."