



MIT **Massachusetts Institute of Technology**
77 Massachusetts Avenue
Room 10-342
Cambridge, MA 02139-4307

617.253.3656
wl.mit.edu
wleague@mit.edu



ANNUAL REPORT 2023

MIT WOMEN'S LEAGUE

ANNUAL REPORT 2023

Mission Statement

The MIT Women's League, founded in 1913, strives to connect women in the MIT community through activities, interest groups, and volunteer opportunities, enriching their lives and the broader MIT Community.

Annual Meeting

Wednesday, May 17th, 2023
Emma Rogers Room
Room 10-342

Program

12:00 pm	Welcome: Cheryl Vossmer, <i>Chair</i>
	Recognition of our 2023 Wiesner Awardees
	Election of Officers
12:20	Lunch
1:00	Remarks from Stu Schmill
1:30	Q&A
2:00	Event end



Stu Schmill

PKG Fellow, Chemistry and History ('23)

Stu's professional career at MIT began in 1987, just one year after he graduated from the Institute with a degree in mechanical engineering. He has served the Institute in a variety of positions, including Director of Crew; Director of Parent, Student, and Young Alumni Programs in the MIT Alumni Association; Director of MIT's Educational Council; and Senior Associate Director of Admissions. Stu has been honored with the Gordon Y. Billard Award for "special service of outstanding merit performed for the Institute," MIT Dean for Undergraduate Education Infinite Mile Award for Leadership, the MIT Alumni Association Harold E. Lobdell '17 Distinguished Service Award, and was also recognized as Outstanding First-Year Advisor for MIT. He was named Coach of the Year in the Eastern Association of Rowing Colleges, the most

competitive rowing league in the country, and has won numerous medals as a coxswain in the Head of the Charles Regatta.

Beyond the MIT campus, Stu is on the faculty of the USC Certificate Program in Enrollment Management; is a member of the College Board's India Global Higher Education Alliance; and serves on advisory boards for a variety of organizations, including Cambridge Assessment International Education and Khan Academy.

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Hello!

Welcome to another year where the MIT Women's League (WL) has been like the tiny daffodils sprouting through the cold earth — bringing a bit of sunshine and smiles to the community. Although our events and programs have been fewer during the years of pandemic lockdowns, our mission is still what drives us. We gathered with old and new friends in September for our Open House and then in early December to make the beautiful holiday wreaths that adorn the entrance of MIT. Many of you have joined us for the exciting monthly coffee conversation events. We plan for these to continue in the years ahead. Join me as I reflect on some of the highlighted activities held in the 2022–2023 year.

Fall Fashion:

In 2020, we were forced to make a huge shift to an online-only model to accommodate the needs of so many of our students. It seems that winter arrived early this year and a few new students were stunned by the cold New England weather. Again, thanks to our Program Officer Elise Perkins-Noel, and Manager Kirsty Bennett, who matched MIT community donors with these students in need of a warm coat, hat, and gloves. The success of matching needs with donors again is a monumental task, but significantly less than the previous sorting, cleaning, moving, event day logistics, and clean up. Thanks to all involved for making this a successful giving event. I'm sure the recipients were grateful during the cold weather this winter. More than 200 items of winter clothing were provided to students. We're grateful to all of those who gave.

Wreath Making:

The tradition of gathering to make the huge wreaths which adorn the entrance at 77 Mass Ave was once again a reality. It brought together several new volunteers who wanted to learn how it's done and to be involved with a WL community event. There was laughter and happiness, adorable children, and holiday cheer. Thank you to all who volunteered! The abundance of glitter pinecones, huge bows, and the wonderful fragrance of balsam boughs certainly was fun.

Open House:

We were delighted to host our Open House in person this year! It was staffed by Jennifer Sousa, Kirsty Bennett, and myself. An invitation was sent to new women of the community and we were delighted by the conversations of the two dozen women who participated. It was a wonderful way to get to know them and for them to learn about the WL. We were able to host in the Emma Rogers Room, with delightful refreshments provided for those who attended. Our talented Jennifer also Zoomed the program to a few additional participants!

Breakfast Series:

This long running event invites women in the MIT community to informal “breakfast talks.” Women faculty and administrators explore the role of women in the academy, sharing the pathways their professional lives have taken. We were delighted to host Professor Gigliola Staffilani and hear her inspiring story of growing up in Italy and discovering her love of math.

Let us think back to three years ago when we didn’t know if we could survive six weeks of being home with spouses, kids, or all alone. We didn’t know if we should cross the street if someone approached us. We didn’t think the pandemic would last this long, and yet we still are doing the best we can to be kind and understanding. Yes, the world and MIT has changed a lot in these years, but the WL mission has not. As we open our hearts to those who need our assistance during these difficult world events, I remain confident in humanity. As I said last year before I was asked to become interim Chair, let me close by saying that it has been truly an honor to serve the WL as the Chair these past five years. Thank you for this opportunity and humbling experience.

Warm regards,
Cheryl

Cheryl Vossmer, *Chair*

SCHOLARS AND AWARDS

PKG Women's League Scholars

The Becky Vest Fellow

Ana Velarde

Humanities and Biology, (UG '24)

Ana conducted a series of workshops about sexuality, identity, and power at Universidad del Valle in Nicaragua. These workshops aimed to introduce students to new frameworks of thinking about their bodies and how they relate to other people with the ultimate goal of reducing sexual violence in university communities. The project began with a survey to assess community health and education needs, followed by the careful organization of community-appropriate content and discussion questions. Ana collaborated with academic and human resources staff at the university to design and implement the workshops. She also created materials that can be picked up by students or other peer educators interested in continuing the project in the future.

The Betty Johnson Fellow

Seamus Lombardo

Aeronautics and Astronautics (G '23)

Seamus' project focused on supplementing the decision-making of the Yurok Tribe in California and the community of Pekalongan, Indonesia. Both the Yurok Tribe and community of Pekalongan are facing difficult decisions when confronting environmental challenges and their related socioeconomic impacts. Seamus is collaboratively developing decision support systems (DSS), a software that will incorporate their local data alongside analyses performed at MIT to supplement their ongoing work and aid in decision making. These DSS utilize satellite remote sensing data and integrated models to explore environmental and socioeconomic factors to aid in evaluating policies or investments.

Laya Weisner Awards

The 2023 Laya W. Wiesner Award
is presented to:

Pamela Stark

The 2023 Laya Wiesner Community Award
is presented to:

Julie Uva

Our warmest congratulations to all of
our awardees!

PROGRAMS 2022–2023

Interest Group Chair’s Meeting

September 14

Women’s League Open House

October 4

Fall-Fashion-Free-For-All

October – December

WISDM Speaker Series:

Erica Salazar

October 13

Coffee Social

October 19

Honorary League Luncheon

October 20

FAIL! Inspiring Resilience

October 21

WISDM Speaker Series:

Sadie Zacharek

November 3

WISDM Speaker Series:

Kate Higgins

November 17

Thank you Reception for Christine Reif

November 21

Coffee Social & Holiday

Wreath-Making

November 30

Coffee Social

January 25

Tour of the Wright Brothers

Wind Tunnel

February 7

Breakfast Series with

Professor Gigliola Staffilani

March 8

Coffee Social

March 14

Honorary League Luncheon

April 20

Women’s League

Annual Meeting

May 17

Women’s League

Appreciation Lunch

June 7

EXECUTIVE BOARD 2022–2023

Christine Reif Honorary Chair
Cheryl Vossmer Chair
Elise Perkins-Noel and
Mary Linan Officers for Programs
Jennifer Fleming Officer for Social Activities
Pamela Schickling-Buckley Treasurer
Ellen Stordy Nominating Chair

Sandra Boynton
Alison Hynd
Tanni Kuo
Deborah Liverman
Nancye Mims
Chris Santos
Laurie Scott
Zahida Taher
Minerva Tirado

WOMEN'S LEAGUE OFFICERS 2023–2025

The Nominating Committee is pleased to announce the following slate of Elective Officers for the Women's League Executive Board:

For two (2) years
Chair
Nancye Mims

For two (2) years
Vice-Chair
Cheryl Vossmer

For two (2) years
Officer for Service Projects
Tanni Kuo

The Board continues the League's tradition of nurturing the growth of new ideas, which, in turn, supports the needs of MIT's community of women.

BOARD AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

In the spring of 2022, the League enthusiastically returned to an in-person Annual Meeting format on Wednesday, May 18, 2022 at 12pm in the Emma Rogers Room. The event was a welcome opportunity for members to reconnect, celebrate our Wiesner Award Winners, and thank our ongoing Board Chair, Cheryl Vossmer, for her support and kindness as she guided us through the last four years. The event also featured guest speakers with a direct connection to the League. Speakers Allison Lee and Jupneet Singh, PKG fellows funded by the Women's League fellowship program, spoke about their respective work and projects, and answered questions from meeting attendees. Out of lingering caution, a takeaway lunch was provided.

In the fall of 2022, our second annual hybrid-style Open House took place. On Tuesday, October 4, 2022 at 12pm, League Manager Kirsty Bennett and League Chair Cheryl Vossmer welcomed folks for in-person conversation and a chance to learn about the MIT Women's League. Simultaneously, Jennifer Fleming hosted a Zoom event in the same location so that folks could log on virtually as well. Light refreshments were served for those who attended in person.

WISDM Speaker Series

This past year, we were proud to continue our speaker series in partnership with The Women in Innovation and STEM Database at MIT (WISDM), and the MIT Innovation Initiative. WISDM promotes the visibility of women in our academic community, increases gender diversity in innovation and entrepreneurship, and makes it easier to find talented and diverse speakers for various events.

These events offered speaking opportunities to graduate and post-doctoral students at MIT, giving them the chance to share their current work and research with a friendly, enthusiastic audience from the Women's League community. This past year we hosted speakers Erica Salazar, Sadie Zacharek, and Kate Higgins. As well as learning about their research, we had a chance to get to know these wonderful women and how they came to be at MIT. This series was popular with our members, and many of the speakers gave thanks for the chance to give a talk so early on in their careers.

We hope to continue this event in the next year!

Kirsty Bennett

Breakfast Series

Every year, we invite members to hear from a woman in the Institute, describe her career path and work at MIT. This was the first time since the pandemic that we were able to bring back this in-person series. We were delighted by the warm response and high turn out for this event.

Our speaker this Spring was Professor Gigiola Staffilani, Abby Rockefeller Mauze Professor in the Department of Mathematics. Professor Staffilani shared her story of growing up in Italy, when women were not expected to get an education, and quietly discovered her passion and aptitude for math. When she first made her way to the USA for her PhD she had limited English, and learning both a new language and meaning her requirements took tremendous fortitude. Professor Staffilani also lead a lively discussion about the challenges facing women in STEM, and particularly in a field that remains very male-dominated, such as math. The talk was both moving and galvanizing – one that reminded up of the challenges women still face and the importance of pursuing your goals.

The Breakfast Series will return in the Fall of 2023!

Kirsty Bennett

FAIL! Inspiring Resilience

On October 21, 2022, the Women's League hosted FAIL, an ongoing lecture series at MIT. The event brings together leaders in their fields and invites them to talk about times they've failed and what they learned from their challenges. This popular event has been part of MIT's events since 2018. This was the first time they worked directly with the Women's League.

The event was held in 10-250, and more than 150 people attended. The event was hosted by Women's League Manager Kirsty Bennett. The audience heard talks from local activist Bill Walczak, entrepreneur Kip Hollister, the Director of Libraries Chris Bourg, and outgoing MIT President L. Rafael Reif. The audience submitted questions to the speakers for a Q&A session held after our speakers shared their stories. This moving event draws a mixed audience of students, postdocs, staff, faculty, and volunteers. Thank you to Francesco Benedetti and Jurgis Ruza and the whole team at FAIL for making this event a reality.

SERVICE PROJECTS

For over 100 years, service to the MIT community has been, and continues to be of primary importance to the League. In this unusual year, service was a particular focus, and our volunteers were engaged in the following League service projects. We are proud and incredibly grateful to have had their support, dedication, energy, and enthusiasm. These are remarkable women who make time, especially in a global pandemic, to make significant contributions to our community.

English Conversation Classes

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the English Conversation Classes. In 1963, the Women's League Matrons saw a need for "English Classes for Foreign Wives" for the "recently married, often pregnant" women who had little opportunity to meet other people or learn English. A male teacher was paid \$432 per term to teach 19 women from 10 countries. The Matrons helped with advertising, babysitting, and friendship. Tuition was \$15 per term.

In 1965, the Matrons, led by Betty Reintjes, Frances Townes, and Greta Uhlig, took over the teaching themselves. In 1966, the Women's League began to offer babysitting during the classes, and Keiko Kanda helmed the babysitting from 1982 until it was discontinued in 2019.

Over the years, enrollment grew. We offered one basic, two intermediate, and two advanced classes. Enrollment peaked at 94 students in the fall of 2014, and we added two more classes to accommodate all the students. We were so fortunate to have a growing cadre of teachers. Most years, enrollments were between 50 and 75 students. Our classes were no longer for "foreign wives," but for anyone with an MIT affiliation, man or woman, including students, visiting scholars, spouses, partners, parents, siblings, and retirees. Tuition kept pace with the times, eventually rising to \$120 per term, and we moved to online

registration. We enjoyed International Dinners in the Bush Room, term-end parties in the Student Center, free guided tours of the MFA, and picnics in the Public Garden.

Then came Covid. In March 2020, when MIT went to Zoom, so did we. I am so grateful to all the teachers who made the transition with grace and technical savvy. We continued the Zoom classes at no cost through Spring 2022. That same term, 50 students registered, but many days only a handful of students attended.

With so few students, we decided to take a hiatus this past fall. We returned this spring with a different format: one class per week for one hour, intermediate and advanced together. Fifteen students signed up, but our average attendance has been only six or seven. Laura Mali-Astrue, Fran Hutchinson, Mary Desprez, and I have taken turns teaching in pairs.

Since 1963, the English Conversation Classes have served more than 3700 men and women from all over the world. But so much has changed in 60 years. Visitors, not only wives, arrive already knowing at least some English — almost all of our students in the past five years have been advanced or intermediate. Many visitors are professionals who continue to work remotely, or who pursue new career paths here in the Boston area. They take advantage of the free ESL classes

in the Cambridge and Boston Public Libraries. Spouses & Partners offers a wide array of opportunities to make friends and practice English, including the Language Conversation Exchange. For all these reasons, we have decided to put the English Conversation Classes on indefinite hold. This is our last semester.

Before I close, I must give heartfelt thanks to Jan Kirtley, who was a big part of this program since 1979 and passed suddenly on July 2, 2020. She was our bedrock. She led the program for so many years and she made it look so easy. And with great sadness, we bid goodbye to our cherished friend and teacher, my mentor and co-teacher, Suzanne Collins, who passed March 3, 2023. We miss both women dearly.

Finally, many thanks to our dedicated teachers who continued through the Zoom years — Mariana Castro, Mary Desprez, Fran Hutchinson, Laura Mali-Astrue, Srirupa Mitra, Vanitha Singh, and Ellen Stordy. It has been an honor and a privilege to work with them. What a team!

With warm memories,
Laurie Scott, *Coordinator*

English Partners Program

The English Partner Program (EPP) returned for the 2021–2022 academic year. Over the course of the academic year, 28 pairs of volunteers and students were introduced to practice conversational English. There were 22 new conversation pairs matched in the fall and 6 new conversation pairs matched in the spring. This spring, 12 volunteers reported that they were continuing to meet with a student they were introduced to in a previous term- some pairs have been meeting for more than 5 years! While the number of students requesting a partner remains low compared with pre-pandemic numbers, the support and connections made through the EPP are important and educational for both the students and the volunteers.

Partners and volunteers met weekly or biweekly, virtually or in person, at a time that worked well for both participants. While most activities on campus have returned after a hiatus during the pandemic, many employees continue to maintain a hybrid or fully remote schedule. Some students face childcare constraints or transportation limitations. The option of meeting either in person or virtually allowed those with limited or no time on campus the flexibility to still participate in the program.

Volunteers have overwhelmingly reported that they thoroughly enjoy meeting with their partners. In addition to meeting regularly for English conversation practice, conversation pairs have reported going to concerts, sharing meals together, and visiting local museums. The volunteers are also a valuable resource for their partners' questions about life in Cambridge. I compiled a list of community and language resources in a Google doc for the volunteers to be shared, as they see fit, their conversation partners. The volunteers were fielding more questions about forming community connections at MIT and language resources in the area, compared with earlier years, and the Google doc was an effort to share knowledge.

Looking forward to next year, there are several language programs, like the Language Conversation Exchange (LCE), that are doing similar work, and I plan to connect with them to discuss ways we can support each other's work. It has been a privilege to work with the EPP volunteers and Women's League English teachers who welcome their English conversation partners and students into the MIT community.

Kara Cunningham, *English Partner Program
Volunteer Coordinator*

Furniture Exchange

The mission of the Furniture Exchange (FX) continues to serve the university communities we encompass — MIT, Harvard, Boston University, Suffolk, Tufts, and Emerson — while promoting sustainability and raising funds through our sales to support the MIT Women's League Scholarship Fund.

This year, it seems we are busier than ever in terms of bodies in the store. There is never a time when there is not an eager customer in the FX, browsing through the housewares and furniture. We received some wonderful donations — items like Italian furniture and Iranian rugs. August continues to be our busiest month as new students arrive and look to furnish their homes. This is usually when we sell out of almost all the furniture and we are finally able to sweep every corner of the warehouse.

This past year, both our social media platforms grew about 25%, with our Facebook and Instagram followers at 4,600 and 1,150 respectively. Please visit our sites at wl.mit.edu and on Facebook and Instagram @mitfx.

The success of the Furniture Exchange stems largely from the support of our wonderful volunteers who keep the place running smoothly,

organize and clean the many pieces of inventory, wait on customers, and rehab furniture. Our volunteers are: Noreen Hagerty Ford, Bette Johnson, Keiko Kanda, Shannon McCord, Fran Miles, Natasha and Lisa Paltseva, Gloria and Irwin Pless, Ronan Reynolds, Cassidy Shubatt, Amanda Siow, and Carolyn Truant. And we are of course very grateful to our loyal customers and generous donators.

A special thank you to Zarrin Foster, the world's best and most understanding Assistant Manager. Another shout-out to Kirsty Bennett, an amazing person who is always a huge help and bright light to the me and to MIT FX. Thanks, too, to Cheryl Vossmer for her kind words, generous donations, and sage advice. And thank you to all the members of the Women's League for their help and support. We hope that the busy shopping and sales continue so we can make a large donation to the MIT Women's League Scholarship Fund.

Warm regards,
Julie Parker, *Manager*

Fall Fashion Exchange (FFE)

The 27th year of the FFE was another wonderful year supporting students who needed warm winter attire. This year, we continued to support students by mailing winter clothing to those in need.

The Office of the First Year and CASE (Class Awareness, Support & Equality) helped to distribute a winter clothing request form to students who identified as having the greatest financial need. Students filled out the form and their data was anonymized. An email went out to WL members and friends with a link to a spreadsheet of requests. Those who were interested signed up on the spreadsheet and then they were connected directly with a student to mail them what they needed.

This program continues to be a success. Our members passed on the email asking for donors around their various departments, and a number of people responded to the call to help. In total, we were able to provide over 100 winter items to 61 students.

To supplement the program this year, we worked with the ARM Coalition (Accessing Resources at MIT) to coordinate donation boxes placed around

campus. Items were collected, sorted, and stored permanently in the Office of the First Year. Any student who needs winter clothing can stop by and take what they need.

Elise Perkins-Noel and Kirsty Bennett

INTEREST GROUPS 2022–2023

INTEREST GROUPS AND ACTIVITIES

As the Fall 2022 academic year began, so too did the activities of the Women's League Interest Groups. Once again the coordinators met on Zoom in September to share their activities and discuss the annual Fall Open House. Covid restrictions were still in place, but a small group was able to gather in the Emma Rogers Room in person to listen to the speakers and learn about Women's League opportunities.

Shared interests and friendships guided the memberships of our several Interest Groups. The MIT Chorale is open to all women from both MIT and Harvard. Happily, the Chorale resumed in-person with rehearsals in January on the MIT campus under the leadership of their new Director, Nhung. The Book Discussion group continued meeting by Zoom with a full complement of members. The books are always varied and the discussions lively. Another popular group is the Fiber Craft Group that also continued online with friends sharing their skills. The Community Craft Fairs are still on hold, but the Wreathmaking event facilitated by the League for many years was held in-person at the end of November. The entrance of 77 Mass Ave was decorated by our lovely wreaths once again!

Our newest interest groups, MITell and Cityside Dining, happily resumed as the Institute began to reopen. MITell collaborates with groups and departments in providing a venue for personal storytelling. Folks come to tell their stories or listen to others and learn. Cityside Dining offered some Spring suggestions for gathering over a meal or perhaps shorter coffee meet-up opportunities. Enjoy a new cuisine and meet a new friend! The Japanese Wives Group, so valuable to the Japanese community of women, will hopefully be able to come together again — both at MIT and also in Japan. Currently, the Pen Pal program has prospered between American women and Japanese women here with their husbands at MIT and those who have returned home. Keeping connected is so important.

We all hope that our groups will soon be able to gather as before — in-person and easily. Often the groups have offered important opportunities for all women around the Institute to connect with each other, sharing mutual interests. Below you will find the full reports of each coordinator. Again, we offer many thanks to the faithful leaders of each of our groups. All are welcome to join at any time in the year by contacting the coordinator or Kirsty in the Women's League Office.

Sandra Boynton,
Interest Group Coordinator

Book Discussion Group

The Women's League Book Discussion group meets eight times each academic year from September to May, traditionally on the fourth Wednesday of the month from 11:30am–1:00pm. We choose the books for discussion in the year ahead through a group vote — a mix of fiction, non-fiction, and classic titles, written by authors from all over the world. Participants take turns volunteering to lead each discussion. In 2022–2023, our book discussions were held via Zoom, with 9-15 members attending each lively gathering.

All are welcome to join and contribute their impressions and opinions as one-time visitors or as enthusiastic regulars! Our membership comes from diverse backgrounds and nationalities which enriches the discussions with many viewpoints and interpretations.

Occasionally, we invite authors to present about books we have read. It's a unique opportunity to learn about their technique, construction, and research. In 2022, novelist Lisa See offered a Q&A interactive conversation based on her book *The Tea Girl of Hummingbird Lane*. It was greatly enjoyed and appreciated by all.

We also gather in the summer on occasion. For instance, to visit a site related to a book or to watch a movie adaptation of a book we have read together. These additional interactions strengthen the conviviality, warmth, and trust of our Book Discussion group.

Barbara Donnelly, Sandy Boynton,
and Maxine Jonas

MIT Women's Chorale

This academic year, 2022–2023, has been a great comeback year for the Chorale. The Chorale resumed in-person weekly rehearsal in the fall. We also welcomed a new musical director, Nhung Truong, a professional musician, trained in choral conducting. She is currently the Director of Music at Noble and Greenough School. Kathy Hess, an alumna, spouse of a faculty member, former head of house for McCormick Hall, and a longtime member of the chorale, is our new administrative director.

In December, the Chorale had its first in-person concert since the pandemic began. Held at Faith Lutheran Church in Cambridge, the program included *In Time of Silver Rain* by Sarah Quartel; *Der Strauss* by Fanny Hensel; *Dorothy Poems* by Craig Hella Johnson; *Chance* by Wei Ning Li; *Pueblito, Mi Pueblo* by Carlos Guastavino; and *Choose Something like a Star* by Randall Thompson.

This spring, the Chorale returned to rehearsals at MIT, spreading out in room 4-370. Our spring concert on May 6 was held at the Harvard-Epworth United Methodist Church in Harvard Square. The theme for this concert was, "The Sorrows and Strengths of Women." The program included *Stabat Mater* by Giovanni Pergolesi; *Madre, la de los Primores* by Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz; Seven

Part Songs Op. 44 by Holst; and *We Sing as One* by B.E. Boykin. We will be accompanied by our remarkable pianist, Leona Cheung, a graduate of the New England Conservatory's collaborative piano program, as well as a string quartet composed of young professional musicians.

We continue to connect members in the MIT community who are interested in making friends and music together. We look forward to meeting more new friends in the fall.

CitySide Dining

CitySide Dining continues to face changes in a post-pandemic world – more restaurants are requiring reservation commitments and offering limited hours in light of staff shortages. Due to these challenges, CitySide Dining tried some new things this year. A few morning meetups were planned for local Kendall Square coffee shops such as Vester and Tatte (both women-founded). Dinner outings included Indian food at The Maharaja in Harvard Square and fresh pizza and pasta at Posto in Davis Square. Next to try is one of the new food halls in Boston proper. Many CitySide folks also enjoyed connecting at the Women's League Coffee Socials which were put into regular rotation this year.

Honorary League

With the Covid-19 pandemic on the wane, the Honorary League held its first in-person event on October 20, 2022. Polina Anikeeva, the Stavros and Matoula Salapatas Professor in Materials Science and Engineering and Professor of Brain and Cognitive Sciences, spoke to a lively group of 21 Honorary League members about *Probing the Mysteries of Brain-Body Communication*.

Professor Anikeeva described her groundbreaking work as a Director for the K. Lisa Yang Brain-Body Center at MIT and an Associate Director of the Research Laboratory of Electronics where she focuses on the development of fiber-based and magnetic neural interfaces between the brain and peripheral organs.

The spring gathering, scheduled for April 20, will feature Laura Schulz, MacVicar Faculty Fellow Brain & Cognitive Sciences and Associate Department Head, Brain & Cognitive Sciences. She will discuss her research about how babies and children learn about the world. As of this writing, we have 28 registrants. With members of our community feeling more and more comfortable attending in-person meetings, we believe that our event attendance will soon return to pre-pandemic levels.

Mid-way through my two-year term as chair, I want to thank my co-chairs Chris Santos and Diana Garcia-Martinez, as well as Women's League Manager Kirsty Bennett for great support and partnership this past year. I look forward to meeting with them over the summer to plan next year's events and nominations for new members of the committee.

We extend our deepest gratitude to the Office of the President for its ongoing generosity and support of the Honorary League.

Nancye Mims, *Honorary League Chair*

Fiber Crafts Group (FCG)

The Fiber Crafts Group met twice a month via Zoom during the past academic year as well as during the Summer of 2022. Emails were sent each month to people who attend meetings as well as people requesting to be informed of meetings. Even with the additional monthly meeting, attendance remained low. It was observed that even though personalized welcome emails were sent to those who attended the League's open house and their emails added to our database, none of the people replied to the emails. We gained a couple of members from the Women's League newsletter and the MIT events calendar. We lost some of the Lincoln Laboratory members due to various reasons including retirement.

Although this type of group is best in an in-person setting, it is really not feasible due to members' on-campus schedules, members remote working, and the lack of parking for those who no longer work at MIT as well as some of our long-standing members. Thus, for the upcoming year, we are looking at having an in-person meeting twice a year — once in October, the other in April — with a meeting place other than the Emma Rogers Room. Co-Chair Olimpia can reserve a meeting room space in the MIT Library. For those who come to the in-person meetings, it will be a great way to connect again with some meeting others for the first time after only knowing each other on Zoom.

Various projects included knitting, crocheting, cross stitching, needlepoint, and embroidery. We would like to connect with similar groups on campus and would be interested in finding out how to access them.

Claudia LaBollita-James, *Co-Chair*
Olimpia Estela Caceres-Brown, *Co-Chair*

Wreath Making

This year, we were able to gather in person once again to make the large holiday wreaths that hang at 77 Mass Ave. Volunteers joined us in the Student Center in November to assemble the wreaths, and it was a chance for old friends to join together, celebrate, and welcome newcomers to this annual tradition.

With covid restrictions lifted, we were able to offer refreshments and also make the event part of our ongoing Coffee Social mornings. With coffee and delicious pastries and holiday music playing, it took around two hours to build the wreaths that were then hung by the wonderful team at Buildings and Grounds. Our thanks to them for all their support for this program.

Many thanks to Brenda Blais for making sure we had all the necessary materials on the day, Minerva Tirado and Jennifer Fleming for helping make the event such a success, and to Cheryl Vossmer for teaching us how to make those beautiful bows! And finally, to every volunteer who showed up and helped out, thank you so much!

Kirsty Bennett

MIT Japanese Wives Group

Friendship is like a flower. It is essential to take care of it every day to make beautiful flowers bloom. Thoughtful consideration to others fosters stronger friendship. Our group is always thinking of friendship.

The MIT Japanese Wives Group organizes the Friendship Partner Program, arranging introductory meetings for our members to exchange their culture with that of their partners.

We have launched a Pen Pal Program between members both here at MIT and in Japan. Our members exchange emails and share experiences from their different environments, and we hope they can build meaningful friendships through this program.

Our current Pen Pal members are: Megumi Enokido, Sofia Caloggero, Asuka Yasutomi, Sharon Lin, Michiko Yoshida, Bette Johnson, Kristin Griffin, Kirsty Bennett, Norie Takada, Takako Suhara, Yuko Tsay, Yuko Asano, Atsuko Pien, Clare Lee, Tseh- Hwan Young, Misao Tanaka, Kimi Shirasaki, Kyoko Maruyama, and Kimie Shirasaki.

We have learned how important it is to feel close to each other through this program. We hope this will give our members many options and opportunities to help build lasting international friendships. Through this program, we were able to make strong ties even in difficult times. No matter how far apart we are, we will always remember each other.

While some people prefer email as a method of communication, others tend to prefer speaking over the telephone or via Skype. For that reason, as a next step we would like to establish the Tancho Link program which will facilitate cultural and experience exchanges via phone or Skype.

In addition to the MIT Japanese Wives Group specific activities, we also will enjoy contributing to MIT activities throughout the year. Megumi Enokido, Asuka Yasutomi, and Kimi Shirasaki donated origami for making origami crane cards. Members in Japan are very happy to continue supporting their MIT counterparts and look forward to continuing to foster international friendships.

I wish to express my thanks to Sofia Caloggero, Sharon Lin, Megumi Enokido, Keiko Noda, Chizu Ikeda, Asuka Yasutomi, Kyoko Maruyama, Etsuko Hasegawa, Ritsuko Koide, and Kimi Shirasaki for all of their help during the year.

And I want to extend my special thanks to Sandra Boynton, Sharon Lin, Keiko Kanda, Kate Baty, Dee Ippen, Sis de Bordenave, Ellen Shapiro, Jennifer Recklet Tassi, Kristin Griffin, Bette Johnson, Tseh-Hwan Yang, and Kirsty Bennett for their advice and counseling.

Kimie Shirasaki, *Chair*

MITell — Storytelling

This past year, MITell held in-person workshops for the MIT Climate and Sustainability Consortium, MISTI, MIT Medical's Racial Equity Group, DSL, and SHASS. MITell also offered one-on-one story coaching to speakers at the inauguration of institute Chaplain Thea Keith-Lucas and the speakers for MIT's 49th Annual MLK Celebration.

We once again collaborated with FAIL!, with invited speakers and academics sharing the impact of failures on their careers and what they learned. Our long running program with the ICEO, Storytelling Lunch, also returned. I hope to offer more of these programs in the coming year.

Kirsty Bennett

ENDOWMENT AND OPERATING FUNDS

The MIT Women's League is administratively a division of the Office of the President, which pays the League's salaries and some office expenses. The League meets other expenses with income from its seven endowed funds, gifts to the annual appeal, and fees for programs and events offered throughout the year.

ENDOWED FUNDS

Emma Moore Fund

In 1916, Emma Moore, an Institute friend and board member of the Emma Rogers Association of Technology Matrons (the original name of the MIT Women's League), established the Matrons Tea Fund to underwrite teas offered to all women in the MIT community regardless of their ability to pay. Later she offered the income from the fund for "any use, social or otherwise" to be at the discretion of the League Executive Board. Today, that income supports many League activities including the English Classes and the two League fellowships in the Priscilla King Gray (PKG) Public Service Center..

- Rebecca M. Vest PKG Public Service Center Fellowship
- Elizabeth W. Johnson PKG Public Service Center Fellowship

Margaret Compton Fund

The Margaret Compton Fund was established in 1949 to honor Margaret Hutchinson Compton, whose husband, Karl Taylor Compton, retired that year as President of MIT. During her lifetime, Mrs. Compton allocated the fund's income to such activities as the Westgate Nursery School and the Technology Children's Center. MIT has since taken over the management of the Institute's childcare facilities. Today, income of The Compton Fund provides unrestricted resources for League activities at the discretion of the League Executive Board. The fund has provided financial support for our Fall Reception for New Women at MIT, the annual Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon, Wreath Making, and the Student Clothing Program.

Laya W. Wiesner Fund

Laya W. Wiesner, wife of Jerome Wiesner, 13th president of MIT, was an ardent supporter of women at MIT and of the League. Laya wanted to recognize the contributions of individuals who helped shape the Institute's quality of life. Upon Mrs. Wiesner's retirement as First Lady of MIT in 1980, the League established this fund to show its esteem for her. To express appreciation for her leadership and her many years of service to MIT, the fund's income supports two individual awards.

The Laya W. Wiesner Award is given annually to an undergraduate woman "who has most enhanced

MIT community life, while at the same time maintaining a good academic record." This year, Anjali Nambrath was honored with the award.

The Laya Wiesner Community Award was established by the League in 1999 to honor Laya's legacy at MIT. This award recognizes "a member or friend of the MIT community for conspicuously effective service that reflects Laya's concerns for enhancing life at the Institute and in the world at large." This year, Amy Brand was honored with the award.

Lucille M. Ravven Memorial Music Fund

Dr. Robert Ravven established this fund in 1988 in memory of his wife, Lucille, who conducted the MIT Women's Chorale from 1968 until 1980. It supports the Chorale including the purchase of its music.

Catherine N. Stratton Lecture Fund

The Women's League established this fund in 1994 to honor Kay Stratton's fifty years of commitment to the Institute and her tireless work to establish and sustain the Stratton Lecture Series. Mrs. Stratton, the widow of Julius Adams Stratton, the 11th president of MIT, was an active member of the lecture committees and of the League as well as the MIT Council for the Arts (another of her initiatives). The fund has received generous donations from current and retired MIT faculty members, the Green Foundation, the Exxon Foundation, and the MIT Women's League itself. Income from the endowment support lecture series on contemporary issues of global concern in the world. Funds in excess of the amount necessary for the lectures may be used to support other activities and programs in the MIT Women's League.

Women's League Discretionary Fund

The Women's League Discretionary Fund was established in 1999 by Cleo and Paul Schimmel to support activities of the MIT Women's League at the recommendation of the chair. A former chair of the League Executive Board, Cleo's fondest dream has been to strengthen the "ties that bind" among League members and with the rest of the MIT community.

The Priscilla King Gray Fund

The Priscilla King Gray Fund, established in 2013 by the League on the occasion of its 100th anniversary, honors Priscilla, wife of Paul E. Gray, MIT's 18th president. Priscilla was honorary chair of the League at the time of this anniversary. Income from this fund has been used to supplement the two League fellowships in the Public Service Center. Priscilla, a co-founder of the Public Service Center, remains an active advocate for its work. The PSC was renamed the Priscilla King Gray Public Service Center in 2015.

SCHOLARSHIP FUND

MIT Women's League Scholarship Fund

Established in 1960 as the Technology Matrons' Student Aid Fund and later known as the MIT Student Loan Fund, this endowment is now the MIT Women's League Scholarship Fund. The interest from the fund provides scholarship aid annually for women undergraduate students. The fund benefits from the proceeds of the Furniture Exchange and the Community Holiday Craft Fair. The League Scholarship Fund now exceeds \$1 million, and in FY2023 is expected to support up to four undergraduate women.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The annual budget for the MIT Women's League in FY 2023, less personnel related expenses, totaled \$53,655. Sources of funds included an MIT allocation of \$6,500, allocations of \$40,355 from expendable balances in League endowed fund accounts, and \$6,800 from the Leagues Programs and Activities Fund. This year at the end of the third quarter, the annual appeal had raised \$10,840 in gifts for the Women's League. The League is extremely grateful to all donors for their generous support and confidence in the League's programs and services to the MIT community.

Through these funds the League provided many benefits to the Institute, including a contribution of \$8,800 to the Priscilla King Gray Public Service Center for the Rebecca M. Vest and Elizabeth W. Johnson Fellowships, and the awarding of the annual Laya Wiesner Awards of \$2,500 each to an MIT undergraduate student and a long-time staff member. In FY2023, we welcomed the return of many in-person activities for the League. This included the Fall Open House, Coffee Socials, Breakfast Lecture Series, the WISDM Speaker Series, Interest Group gatherings, the Winter Clothing Drive for students in need, and our annual tradition of assembling the holiday wreaths to decorate MIT's main entrance at 77 Massachusetts Avenue. We created the

Christine Reif Professional Development Award in collaboration with our friends at MIT Spouses & Partners Connect to honor Mrs. Reif's legacy with an annual award in her name. We also continue to hold our English Conversation Classes via Zoom.

At the end of the third quarter of FY2023, the combined fund value of the League's seven endowed funds was \$378,620, which includes \$82,950 in the Priscilla King Gray Fund. Expendable income from these endowed funds supports the Wiesner Awards, both the Vest and Johnson Fellowships in the Priscilla King Gray Public Service Center, the MIT Women's Chorale, and the League's annual operations.

This data reflects the third quarter results for FY2023. The final Women's League Treasurer's Report will be available in the Women's League Office, soon after the MIT fiscal year closing on June 30.

Pamela Schickling Buckley, *Treasurer*

