Greetings!

As we are several weeks into social distancing and self-isolation, words that I never thought would become part of my daily vocabulary, I hope this letter finds you and yours doing well. I know some of you have family in other parts of the world and hope they too are doing well with this pandemic.

I’m taking this opportunity to write to you as we navigate through this historic time. These unprecedented times and still lots of unknowns about this virus, I have made the difficult decision to postpone all meetings of the Women’s League until September, unless things change. With that being said, we will hold board meetings and some interest group meetings, such as book discussion, via Zoom. We do want to stay connected with each other!

Although the May 19 Annual Meeting has been postponed, the Board members will be working on a summary of what we’ve accomplished this year.

We will be sharing that information with you through publication of the Annual Report which we will distribute in coming months. Please join me in thanking Renie Pavilion for being the glue to hold so much together in Kirsty’s maternity absence. We will hold a thank you luncheon when we’re able to safely gather together. With that being said we are delighted to virtually welcome Kirsty back to the office.

In summary, I’m so sorry that I’m unable to see each and every one of you. If any of you need anything please reach out to me or Kirsty. We are here for each other today, more than any other day.

Cheryl Vossmer
Chair

The 2020 Laya Weisner Awards: nomination deadline extended

The MIT Awards Convocation honors MIT students, faculty, staff, and community members who have made outstanding contributions to the shared life of the Institute. Although we are not physically on campus, students have resumed their studies, professors are teaching, and many staff are working from home. The deadline to submit your nominees has been extended to April 24.

Two specific awards, that honor former MIT first lady Laya Wiesner, are reviewed and selected by the Women’s League board. We invite you to nominate a deserving member of our community for each award.

The Laya W. Wiesner Award is awarded to an undergraduate woman. It "recognizes a young woman who has helped make MIT a better, happier, friendlier environment. This award recognizes her contributions, made in any area of Institute life, while at the same time maintaining a good academic record."

awards.mit.edu/awards/laya-w-wiesner-award

The Laya Wiesner Community Award is given to "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."

awards.mit.edu/awards/laya-wiesner-community-award

To see a full list of awards to be distributed visit the website: awards.mit.edu/nominate.
English Conversation Class in the time of COVID-19

The English Language Classes were officially cancelled in mid-March, but many teachers and students continue to meet via Zoom. Thanks to the leadership and organization of Laurie Scott, students were offered the option to try virtual meetings. Several teachers and students have continued to check-in, chat and share stories. While this doesn’t replace in person instruction, we’re happy that our English language learners and committed volunteer teachers are sticking together during the quarantine.

A note from Laurie Scott, English Conversation Class Coordinator: The Women’s League has refunded full tuition for all our students, in light of M.I.T.’s cancellation of on-campus classes. That has not stopped our classes from continuing to meet online, though, thanks to our devoted teachers. All five classes are engaged.

All five classes are using Zoom to stay in touch, continuing regular lesson plans, and conversation, and sharing observations and tips on dealing with the new normal.

Both premier Zoom and M.I.T.’s Zoom application allow us to use screen sharing and whiteboards, and even online we can break into smaller groups, just as we did in our regular classes.

Finally, our Basic class continues with its regular curriculum via telephone and online classes. Facebook and WhatsApp keep us connected, too. And of course, we have our students to thank for their help with all the technical aspects.

Looking for an interesting read?

The Book Discussion interest group will host virtual meetings via Zoom in April and May. Please let Nancy Holloman (nancyredsox@gmail.com) know if you’d like to be added to the email list or if you have books you would like to recommend for future discussions.

Upcoming books and links for joining the April 22 and May 27 discussion are listed here.

Prior to joining the meeting, please visit zoom.us and download the app to your phone, ipad or computer. All are welcome!

April 22 Book Discussion: "An American Marriage" by Tayari Jones
Time: Apr 22, 2020 11:30 AM

May 27 Book Discussion: "Salt to the Sea" by Ruta Septys
Time: May 27, 2020 11:30

If you’re looking for a way to help out in the fight against COVID-19, consider this project started by MIT staff.

Spearheaded by Superwoman Saana McDaniel who is Senior Program Manager at MIT, Project Manus & Make Impact Consortium, six women in the Lexington/Boston/ Medford/Belmont area have been making masks and caps for Boston Medical Hospital and Brigham & Women’s. They have also started assisting MANNA in downtown Boston, making masks for the unhoused community. There has been much sanitizing and sharing of supplies and a wonderful community has been born of the need to provide for our front-line workers.
The April 16 Honorary League Luncheon, at the Samberg Conference Center, has been cancelled. Invitations were sent in early March, before we were aware of the scope of the pandemic. We are hopeful that a rescheduled luncheon will take place on Thursday, October 15. More information to come in the Fall.

Before social distancing (remember those days?) we had a table in Lobby 10 for International Women’s Day.

Students and members of the community came by to learn more about the WL, what we offer and take part in a trivia game.

Many visitors to the table picked up free pens and bookmarks, and enjoyed delicious cupcakes decorated with the WL logo. We hope to hold this event again next year!

League Interest Groups

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Visual Identity Ink Design

International Women's Day

The MIT Women's League Newsletter is published four times during the academic year. Please email the office for a hard copy of the newsletter or for any questions you may have.

Manager Kirsty Bennett
Chair Cheryl Vossmer
Honorary Chair Christine Reif
Visual Identity Ink Design

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