

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

NEWS & EVENTS

<https://uawc-utwa.artsci.utoronto.ca/>

Volume 5 No 1

July 2022

2022: third year about the latest wave of Covid-19 pandemic!

At our meeting on **February 17, 2022**, Sue Russell introduced our keynote speaker, an extraordinary landscape and wildlife photographer, Peter Baumgarten, who lives on Manitoulin Island. A former teacher, Peter decided to pursue photography when he retired. He has achieved such success that he has won several awards in the Canadian Geographic magazine Annual Photography Competitions. During his hour-long presentation on *Photographing the World of Wildlife – From the Forest to your Own Backyard* - he showed us over a hundred magnificent nature photos and told us the stories of each shot – where he found the bird or animal, what kind of lens he used, how long he had to wait to get the best possible picture, and more. He's a fascinating story-teller and communicator.

Manitoulin Island is really a huge nature reserve. To create his photographs, Peter sets off from his home in the country by car, canoe, kayak or snowshoes, ferry rides, at any time of the day or night, often in search of special lighting effects. He likes to take lots of shots and choose the best ones at home rather than photo-shopping. But he reminds us that nature comes to our own backyards as well. He gave us some hints on how to improve our own wildlife photographs - Always have your camera at the ready: wild creatures may appear by surprise, but they won't wait for you. Patience is the key to getting the best possible pictures you can. Keep your distance as much as possible - instead of walking up close to the bird or animal, use a longer photo lens to focus in. All great and small creatures can make interesting photographs, whether sleeping or rushing or flying. And don't forget that landscape photographs are just as beautiful as wildlife!

Peter's photographs of landscapes, sunsets, falls, shore lines, wild life, bears, beaver, porcupine, birds in flight, Canada geese, eagle, owl, otter, and others are extraordinary. Christine McClymont, our Programmer, thanked Peter for his breathtaking photography and for being such a magical story teller.



Peter Baumgarten

Peter Baumgarten

Photographer, Creative Island Photography, Olympus Visionary, NiSi Official Photographer



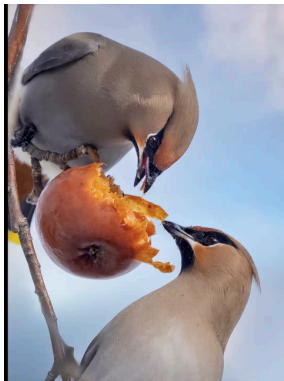
Peter with his white lens to get up close



Nature 100 Feet Down



Wild Life



Birds in Action



Birds in Flight

On **March 17, 2022**, at the Club's online General Meeting, our presenter Marta O'Brien – author, architectural historian, and founder of Citywalks Tours & Talks – was introduced by our Treasurer, Bobbi Slater. Besides leading historical tours, Marta teaches architectural history courses at the School of Continuing Education in the University of Toronto. For seven years she has been a volunteer member of the Heritage Toronto Board of Directors. Recently she was elected an Honorary Member of the Ontario Association of Architects.

Marta began by wishing us a happy St. Patrick's Day! For her talk, she chose to share with us *Toronto Treasures: Two Historic Mansions* that happen to find themselves on the University of Toronto campus today: Matthews House and Christie Mansion. A superb speaker, she is also an outstanding photographer who works hard to obtain pictures of interior treasures as well as the architecture of the exteriors.

Matthews House, built in 1891, is located at 89 St. George Street, at the corner of Hoskin Avenue, streets then lined with huge mansions. The grand home in the Queen Anne Revival style was built by businessman Wilmot D. Matthews, famous as the "barley king" of Canada, but also a successful banker and executive in the Electric Light Company. The exterior was composed of many elements - red clay brick, Credit Valley sandstone and pressed terra cotta for decorative elements. The interior, still beautifully preserved, features grand staircases and decorations of carved oak, elaborate plaster artwork, coloured tiles, fireplace boxes showing decorative metal scenes, neo-classical columns, and delicate and elaborate ceilings. The overall feeling is of colour and warmth. Since 1922 it has become the Newman Centre, a meeting place for Roman Catholic students at the University of Toronto. Matthews House was one of the first buildings to receive the Ontario Heritage designation.

Christie Mansion, also graced with a Toronto red brick exterior, is located at 25 Queen's Park Crescent West. Built in 1881 by the baker who founded the famous Christie's cookie company, William Mellis Christie, it is an elegant building in the Gothic Revival style. It was totally renovated in 1910, and the interior has lost some of its charm over the years. But the white plaster ceilings with their intricate carvings continue to shine. Other features include beautiful built-in bookcases, carved oak banisters, tall windows, and a dramatic skylight at the tip of the staircase. In 1926, the mansion became a residence for the female students of St. Michael's College. Today, many of the rooms have been divided into classrooms, but Marta showed us a photo of the strikingly beautiful solarium filled with greenery and soft chairs. In 2008 Christie Mansion became the property of Regis College at the University of Toronto.

Linda Andrews, Membership, thanked Marta for replacing our original speaker at short notice (Lee Maracle, who died suddenly in November 2021) and expressed how much we all appreciated her historical commentary and marvellous images of these historical mansions.

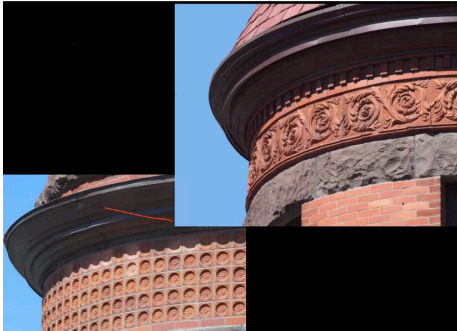


Marta O'Brien

Author, Architectural Historian, Founder of Citywalks Tours & Talks



Wilmot D. Matthews House – 1890-1891, at 89 St. George Street, Toronto, ON



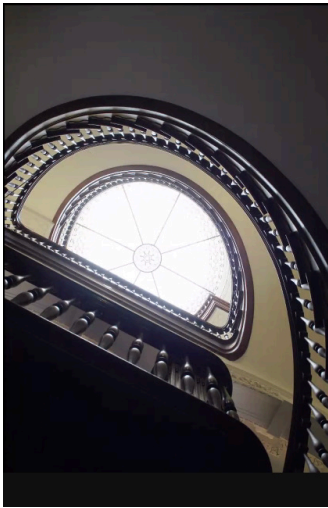
Exterior of Matthews House



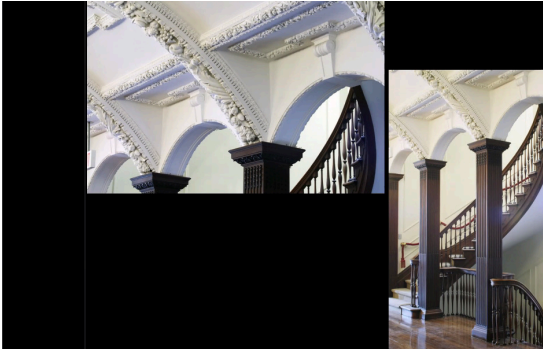
Interior of Matthews House



Christie Mansion 1910, at 25 Queen's Park Crescent West, Toronto, ON



Interior of Christie Mansion



Interior of Christie Mansion

On **April 21, 2022**, Gay Thomson, our Past President, introduced the Honorable Dr. Vivienne Poy, who gave a warm, dynamic talk about **Serendipity: The Stroke of Luck that Brought her to Canada**.

Vivienne began her talk by saying “This afternoon I want to talk about something light and fun to celebrate the return to our modified pre-pandemic existence!” She talked about her early life in Hong Kong, experiences in an English boarding school, and how she became a Canadian.

Vivienne came to Montreal to study at McGill University. She enjoyed great experiences and learned from friends she made in residence. She shared fascinating insights into her undergrad days. Naturally, cold winter weather was mentioned as she was wearing the fashion of the day - miniskirts. At the annual Winter Carnival, 1960, in her first year at McGill, with huge fanfare in the Montreal Forum, media, music and lights came the announcement over the PA system that she was elected Carnival Queen. She was crowned by McGill’s Chancellor Powell. For that event, she needed a white evening dress. She was at McGill to study after all, so why would she need an evening dress? **Serendipity** came along! One of the princesses from the year before, Derry Alan, a petite, slim girl, offered to lend her a white strapless evening dress. Unbelievably, it fitted perfectly. What a dream for an 18-year old girl from Hong Kong!

So, how did Vivienne end up staying in Canada? None of her family members came to live here. But the most important connection came soon. More **Serendipity!** Vivienne really got to know Dr. Neville Poy, her future husband, who was in his final year Medical school. They dated throughout university and in 1962, after her graduation, they were married. Now, 60 years later, Neville was sitting with us at The Faculty Club, University of Toronto, listening to his wife’s talk.

In 1962 Vivienne received her Canadian citizenship certificate in the mail and ever since, she has been a staunch Canadian in every sense of the word.

Vivienne served as a member of the Senate of Canada from 1998 to 2012, as the Chancellor of University of Toronto from 2003 to 2006, and has received eight honorary doctorates. She was a fashion designer and established her own business when her children were young. Subsequently, she went to graduate school at the University of Toronto and obtained her PhD degree in History. She achieved all these accomplishments while married to Dr. Poy and raising three sons.

Vivienne’s talk brought her listeners in. The only sounds in the room as she spoke were of amazed delight, pride, and fascination. In conclusion, our club members shared their cherished memories with her. In closing, on behalf of UAWC-UTWA members, Maureen Somerville, a longtime friend, expressed warm thanks for enlightening and entertaining us.



The Honourable Dr. Vivienne Poy

Author, Former Senator of Canada, and Chancellor Emerita of the University of Toronto
(courtesy Dr. Neville Poy)

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

Maggy Stepanian

July 8, 2022

