



AWCCS Newsletter
American Women's Club of Central Scotland

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Welcome to our Newsletter for April May. You can view this newsletter on our [Members Only](#) site (login is required), as well as [a download](#) here.

The AWCCS Annual General Meeting (AGM)

U.S. Consul General Jack Hillmeyer



and

The American Women's Club of Central Scotland

cordially invite you to attend the

AWCCS 2022 Annual General Meeting

at the US Consulate General Edinburgh

3 Regent Terrace,
EH7 5BW
Monday, May 23, 2022
6:00 – 7:45 p.m.

Light Refreshments from 6:00 – 6:30

Annual General Meeting begins 6:45

Remarks from Jack Hillmeyer

We are planning for a hybrid AGM.
The Consulate has set a limit of 40 attendees.
A zoom link will be sent to enable members at home to join
the business meeting and the remarks by CG Hillmeyer

An event announcement will be sent the first week in May at which time we will be asking you to respond if you plan to attend. We will be following Scottish Government Covid guidance

We hope to see you there.
The AWCCS Annual General Meeting (AGM)U.S. Consul General Jack Hillmeyer

Greetings from your AWCCS President

Greetings family,

That's what we are, a family of expats living uncommonly in Scotland. We are a beautiful, diverse group of people with a common goal, finding happiness living abroad. I hope that life has not been too cruel while we tackled the covid dilemma; and these last few months, as we crawl somewhat painfully out of the covid era, sees us getting back to normal life, or whatever our new normal may be.



The time has seen us starting to meet up again from Coffee mornings, to one on ones, to dinner meetups. I hope you have been able to find time to honor your own happiness and do something for you?

As we move into Spring and Summer, we have so many wonderful events planned so stay tuned and keep your eye on the website. We are also losing some of our long-time members as they return to the US, we will sorely miss them. Challenge yourself to participate more, if you haven't and encourage others to participate. This group is about you. You and me and everyone else who has chosen to join us as a family.

Next month we have our **FAWCO conference** coming up in Luxembourg. I am so excited to show up for us and I'm looking forward to making many new friends. The **AGM** is also on the table next month and will be held at the consulate. Everyone is invited but there is limited space so you must be registered to go.

Finally, thank you all for being you and for all that you do to support us as a group family. I'm looking forward to seeing you all in the coming months, in one activity or the other.

Best wishes,
Cynthia

UPCOMING EVENTS

[Keeping Connected April 2022](#)

21 Apr 2022 18:00

Zoom

AWCCS Events Explored

AWCCS Keeping Connected on Zoom - February 22, 2022

By Alana Victor, member as of 2021

Sometimes you just need a good laugh. This was the sentiment as members convened virtually on Monday, February 22 to catch up and share funny stories. The group learned more about one another while exchanging all sorts of humorous memories, from food mishaps and torn trousers, to underestimating storms and the unexpected things one comes across in a graveyard.

Roseline recalled a feeling that many knew well, the tired delirium of adjusting to a new time zone after a long flight. While at dinner with her family she reached for what she thought was a merengue and was met with a squishing in her fingers of what turned out to be puffed butter.

Moments like this, when you find yourself seized with laughter from the combined feeling of surprise and embarrassment, are not often forgotten. This was true of the day nine-year-old Nancy jumped on the trampoline with her brother's boy scout troop and the split second she heard the sound of her pants ripping at the seams as she bounced into the air to do a trick.

Mary Jo reminded us that some experiences are not funny in the moment, but commonly bring humor in retrospect, like the time she got separated from her young daughters during a passport check and used her controlled, elevated voice to set the matter straight.

Sometimes the nuance of accents, even when we are speaking the same language, can take us by surprise and inspire laughter. Carole shared her amusing experience with a telephone operator and the use of the "intrusive R" when calling collect from Scotland back home to the United States.

Other times all you can do is chuckle when you forget you are in possession of explicit magazines after discovering them stashed behind the family gravesite and trying to discreetly remove them. Sallie had the entire group in fits of giggles as she recounted a series of events that even the best comedian could not have made up.

Alana's story confirmed that even the most thoughtful plans can be foiled when you misjudge the weather. The best thing to do is find the joy in the situation at hand.

And all smiled while listening to stories of Dorothy's adventures, including a chance meetup with a sibling in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, one of many stops, during a long voyage sailing from Long Beach, California to London, England in an effort to get home to Scotland.

It was only fitting that a meeting so cheerful was concluded with a sneak peek at Nancy's juggling, a party trick she learned at mime school that many hope to see in person someday

Events to Consider

The Leighton Library, Dunblane

The magnificent medieval cathedral in Dunblane attracts many visitors, but not that many notice a wonderful little 17th century building lying in its shadow. With its typical Scottish architecture, this is Scotland's oldest purpose-built library, opened in 1687 as the bequest of Bishop Leighton, who left his wonderful book collection to the cathedral clergy. There are some 1400 early books of his, the oldest dating from 1504.

A Trust was established in 1701 which manages the Library to this day. Whilst the Bishop died in 1684, the Trustees added to the collection until the mid-19th century, leaving us also with an extraordinary collection of many important books from Scotland's Age of Enlightenment. Volumes include Adam Smith's Wealth of Nations, Dr Johnson's famous English Dictionary, the Edinburgh edition of Robert Burns's poems, a first edition of the Lady of the Lake by Walter Scott, which started the Scottish tourist industry, and many more.

For the American visitor, we have a rare and beautiful atlas of the known parts of North America from 1776, first editions of Thomas Paine's Common Sense (1776) and The Rights of Man, and several accounts from the 1700s including, amongst others, a record of travels among the Native American tribes, 1766-1768.



A public exhibition of the American Atlas and some early books on North America will be held in the **Dunblane Museum 2–30 May 2022**. We hope to raise awareness of our visitor attraction and to raise funds for our restoration appeal. There is a page on the restoration fundraising on our website.

We have recently been contacted by a US Citizen in Austin, Texas, who believes he is a descendant of Bishop Leighton. He is becoming involved in our restoration plans and hopes to bring together the many Leighton descendants who are in the USA.

Apart from our May exhibition, we welcome visitors during our open summer season as well as private visits by arrangement.

For more information, please visit www.leightonlibrary.org.uk

appreciates this volunteer work for the club. Please contact Joyce for more information and to tell/inform her of your interest.

Best regards,

Joyce Halsan (contact info in the directory on Members Only page.)

AWCCS Board Notes

Visitors to Club Events

Just a point of clarification. In the AWCCS bylaws we have a statement regarding visitors to our club events under:

"Article VI. Membership, section 4:

4. Visitors: Visitors may attend Club events upon invitation of a member and shall pay full price for entrance fees and other costs. A non-member who is eligible for membership shall be limited to two meetings per year as a visitor."

The board has agreed that the "club events" can be in person or by zoom, and that the present bylaws statement could stand as is. Please read our [Bylaws](#) to clarify the AWCCS position of visitors to club events. If you have a non-member friend who comes often to our events, please invite them to join the AWCCS and enjoy other benefits as a member.

Privacy Guidelines for AWCCS

We cannot keep our membership information, including names and addresses, on a separate Facebook account, or on any member's own email account. Our members have been promised that we will keep the information they give to us private and that they will have control over what shows in the directory and/or in their profile. And most particularly we will destroy their records when they are no longer a member. This is only possible to do if we keep the records in one place. Our Membership Chair will keep our members on the database while she is sending renewal notices and reminders out and will delete their record when that process has finished and the person has not renewed.

The Communications Convenor has the responsibility to provide a link to our "[Privacy Policy](#)" on our website at the bottom of each page. It is part of the (General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which "regulates the processing by an individual, a company or an organisation of personal data relating to individuals in the EU." Please take a minute to read our Privacy Policy so that you understand our individual obligations to keep our members' data secure.

Communication News

Joyce Halsan announced that she will retire from her Board position as **Communication Convenor** at the end of this year (June 2022) and asked the club to begin the process of filling her position. See a detail of the position above under Club Announcements.

Contact Us

Member News:



April 2022	May 2022
Patricia Ramaer - April 2nd	Karen MacCormick – May 12 th
	Amanda Drollinger- May 17 th
	Carole Dispenza-Henderson - May 21 st

Congratulations to Kate Pearson and Joao Mota on the birth of Helena Demeyer on 24 January 2022. A sister for Alexander.

Joanne McNiven, one of our long-time members, died on 26 February 2022.

She came to Scotland from Orange County CA when she married Mitchell in 1987 and until the last few years attended most of our events, and was especially fond and supportive of the Book Club. In her younger years she spent considerable time on Navaho reservations in the Southwest, where her father was a doctor. She was gentle and compassionate, interested in people, and involved with her church. At her funeral her son Don, who had come over from California, read a poem she had written that summed up her philosophy of life:

The most special gifts in life are Love and Friendship
In my words, the beauty of Friendship goes something like this:
It cannot be made, necessarily described, or measured.

It is a special gift coming from the heart.
You give so much so often – in so many special ways,
In loving words of comfort in times of need,
In taking time to talk a while, trying to understand,
In sharing other people’s joys, always thinking of others,
Helping where and when you can.
You have a very special way of giving in everything you do,
This makes your gifts the most priceless gift – a gift of yourself.
May this day be especially happy along with every day of your life!

Joanne had many friends and was a friend to many in the American Women’s Club. We will miss her.

Zoom Events

Kahoot! with Mary Jo



on April 28, 2022

Starts at 7:30 PM

on May 19, 2022

Starts at 7:30 PM

Play the online Question & Answer Game

RSVP using the Event Email that has been/will be sent to you.

Watch for Kahoot future dates

April Keeping Connected

on April 21, 2022

Starts at 6:00 PM

Bring a cartoon, nonsense rhyme, limerick, or story that made you laugh

RSVP to Nancy using the Event Email that has been/will be sent to you.

Edinburgh Events

American Women's Club of Central Scotland invites you to

Coffee Morning Charity Event

Thursday April 14th
at 10am



Come help us celebrate the grand opening of Edinburgh's newest mobile coffee shop. AWCCS long time member Michelle Wirt will be bringing her coffee pod to Colinton (Katie Graham's house) for one day only. Please come and join us for a coffee and a chat. The coffee is on us. We will be collecting donations for the [Kilbrandon Fund](https://www.the-kilbrandon-fund-edinburgh.org). Any contributions would be greatly appreciated. We hope to see you there.

Katie's address will be sent to you after you RSVP "Yes" in the reminder email.

We endeavor to follow the Scottish COVID-19 most recent guidelines as far as possible. Please contact Katie if you have any questions.

Important links:

<https://www.the-kilbrandon-fund-edinburgh.org>

<https://www.awccs.org>

Edinburgh Book Group

Friday, 22 April

10:15

Home of Jenny Gibb

The Orphan Train

by Christine Baker Kline

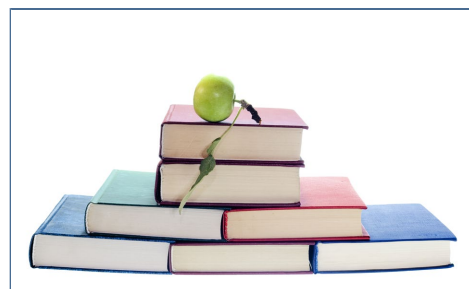
Friday, 20 May

10:15

Contact: Dale

A Long Petal of the Sea

by Isabel Allende



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U.S. NEWS

Have you registered to vote?

November 2022 will be a crucial year for midterm elections in the US. Federal law allows Overseas Americans – which in all but 13 states includes those, such as children of citizens, who may never have lived in the U.S. but have citizenship by virtue of a parent – to vote in all Federal elections. To do so, you must be registered to vote. To ensure that you receive your ballot, both for primaries and for the midterm elections, Overseas Americans must register to vote in each calendar year. Some states may keep previous registrations on file and send out ballots, but this is increasingly no longer the case in many states. So if you have not yet registered, do so today!



According to estimates of the Overseas Vote Foundation (an initiative of the U.S. Vote Foundation), only 4% of the 2.6 million U.S. citizens living overseas who are eligible to vote actually vote. Another survey found that only 57% of those who requested a ballot voted.

Let's get these numbers up!

Registering is easy. There are write-in tools that allow you to complete your registration in just 10 minutes (see websites below). Start by indicating your state, then you can type directly on the form, which will indicate the voting rules of and information required by your state. Once the form is completed, you will be able to download and print, sign, and mail it to your County Clerk at the address that will be indicated.

The following are websites where you can fill out your ballot online:

[Federal Voting Assistance Program \(FVAP\)](https://www.fvap.gov/eo/overview/materials/forms): <https://www.fvap.gov/eo/overview/materials/forms>

[Vote from Abroad](http://www.votefromabroad.org): www.votefromabroad.org

[US Vote Foundation \(recommended by FAWCO\)](https://www.usvotefoundation.org/): <https://www.usvotefoundation.org/>

[American Citizens Abroad](https://www.fawco.org/us-issues/u-s-voting) also offers good advice and articles about voting:

<https://www.fawco.org/us-issues/u-s-voting>

Thanks to Dale Finlayson for this information



AMERICAN CITIZENS ABROAD
EDUCATE, ADVOCATE AND INFORM

Some Useful Information on U.S. Tax Filing

from American Citizens Abroad

Americans living abroad have to file a U.S. federal tax return every year just like Americans living in the States. What are the US tax changes 2022 for Americans overseas?

1. Requirement for Americans living overseas to file US taxes unchanged

The requirements for **Americans living abroad to file U.S. taxes**, and report foreign accounts, assets, and businesses remain unchanged.

2. US tax filing deadline 2022 The requirements for Americans living abroad to file U.S. taxes and report foreign accounts, assets, and businesses remain unchanged. The 2022 date for filing and paying any tax due is April 18. However, Americans living abroad receive an automatic extension until June 15 – and can apply for an additional extension to October 15 (or October 17 in 2022) – which will not change for filing in 2022, but any payments due to the IRS must be paid by April 15 or penalties may be incurred.

3. Tax brackets and rates for filing in 2022

For filing for the 2021 tax year in 2022, tax brackets and rates have been adjusted for inflation, while the standard deduction increases to \$12,550. This means that only Americans whose worldwide income exceeded the standard deduction amount in the 2021 calendar year need to file in 2022, unless they have self-employment income or they are married but file separately, even if filing separately from a non-American spouse.

The tax year 2021 tax brackets and rates for filing in 2022 are as follows:

- 37% for incomes over \$523,600 (\$628,300 for married couples filing jointly).
- 35% for incomes over \$209,425 (\$418,850 for married couples filing jointly).
- 32% for incomes over \$164,925 (\$329,850 for married couples filing jointly).
- 24% for incomes over \$86,375 (\$172,750 for married couples filing jointly).
- 22% for incomes over \$40,525 (\$81,050 for married couples filing jointly).
- 12% for incomes over \$9,950 (\$19,900 for married couples filing jointly).
- The lowest rate is 10% for incomes of single individuals with incomes of \$9,950 or less (\$19,900 for married couples filing jointly).

4. Foreign Tax Credit on Form 1116

However, Americans filing from abroad can offset U.S. tax on foreign source income if they've paid tax on it abroad by claiming the Foreign Tax Credit on Form 1116 when they file their federal U.S. tax return.

5. Foreign Earned Income Exclusion on Form 2555

Alternatively, Americans filing from abroad can claim the Foreign Earned Income Exclusion on Form 2555, for income earned from employment or self-employment, whether they're paying foreign income taxes or not. This means that most Americans filing from abroad don't end up owing any U.S. tax, but it depends on each individual's circumstances, of course.

6. Foreign Earned Income Exclusion

The maximum amount of income from employment or self-employment from 2021 that overseas residing Americans can exempt from U.S. tax by claiming the [Foreign Earned Income Exclusion](#) also rises for filing in 2022 and is **\$108,700** per person.

7. Proposed US tax changes 2022

President Biden's proposed tax and infrastructure plans, the [Building Back Better Act](#), contains some changes that will affect Americans living abroad.

- If passed in the Senate, Americans with offshore corporations, including hundreds of thousands of expats, will be affected by an effective new GILTI tax rate of 15%, rising from the current 10.5%, for those who claim the 962 Election.
- If the corporation already pays foreign corporation tax at a higher rate than 18.9%, then they may be able to still claim an exemption to offset GILTI, though.

8. Increased Additional Child Tax Credit

The increased Additional Child Tax Credit of \$3,000/\$3,600 per dependent child for the 2021 tax year is unfortunately only available if you spent half of 2021 physically present in the U.S. For many American parents living abroad who don't meet these residency criteria, the Child Tax Credit amount is worth \$2,000 per child, or, if you have already eliminated your U.S. tax bill by claiming the Foreign Tax Credit, you can receive a \$1,400 per child refund.

9. Additional income tax surcharge for high earners

When the Build Back Better act is enacted, it is most likely to affect a group of overseas Americans because of the introduction of an additional income tax surcharge for very high earners, being those who earn over \$10 million (or \$5 million if you're married but file separately).

10. Streamlined procedure

If you've been living overseas for a while but have never filed your U.S. taxes, there's an amnesty program called the [Streamlined Procedure](#) available that enables Americans overseas to catch up without facing any sanctions.

Need more information about Americans living abroad and US tax changes 2022?

If you have any questions about US taxes 2022 can contact Americans Overseas. Two dual nationals living abroad founded Americans Overseas. In the costly and exhausting process of finding the right experts, they realised they had not only accumulated a mountain of knowledge but also built up a solid network of tax and legal experts. Do not hesitate to [contact us](#) if you have any questions.

Thanks to Dale Finlayson for this update

FAWCO NEWS

FAWCO Target Project Update

by Caroline Graves



In March FAWCO held the virtual portion of the biannual meeting, this was the business portion of the meeting with a more social focused in-person event planned for May in Luxembourg. The big headline of this year's meeting was the wrap up of the 2019-2022 Target Project which was in support of Project SAFE: Hope for Girls and Women Tanzania. These projects run 3 years; the first is a chance for FAWCO members to nominate relevant projects that are close to their hearts and select the next Target Project and the next two years are for focused fundraising.

TP4 kicked off the fundraising phase in early March 2020 with a goal of £140,000. Earlier this month, it was announced that a total of £176,000 was raised for Project SAFE. A fantastic success.

This also kicks off the 2022-25 Target Project, which will be focused on the Environment. You can learn about the target project and the selection process on the FAWCO website.

2021 Personal Income Tax Filing Information

[FAWCO Tax & Banking Articles](#)

April 18, 2022

- File individual tax return (Form 1040) - for expats, this deadline is automatically extended until June 15, 2021.
- File Report of Foreign Bank and Financial Accounts (FBAR) - or simply wait until October 17 - the automatic extension deadline.

Note: Expat children with foreign financial accounts are also required to file FBARs.

- To avoid late payment penalties, make a payment of any US tax you owe. Alternatively, if you have sustained a substantial financial loss, file Form 1127, *Application for Extension of Time for Payment of Tax Due to Undue Hardship*, to request a 6-month extension to pay taxes due (in some cases, the extension may be granted for a longer period).

June 15, 2021

- File Form 1040 or an extension of time to file until October 17, 2022 (extension filed with Form 4868).

October 17, 2022

- File the extended tax return (Form 1040); or
- apply for an additional two-month extension to file Form 1040 until December 15.
- File the FBAR (October 15 is an automatic 6-month extension/no further extension is possible).

December 15, 2022

- The final deadline to file 2021 US tax returns.

2021 Minimum Income Filing Thresholds:

Whether someone must file a federal income tax return depends on their worldwide gross income, filing status, age, and whether they are a dependent.

- \$5 if married filing separately (MFS)
- \$12,550 if filing single (\$14,250 for those 65 or older)
- \$18,800 if filing as a head of household (HOH) (\$20,500 for those 65 or older)
- \$25,100 if married filing jointly (MFJ) (\$26,450 if one spouse is 65 or older, \$27,800 if both are over 65 years old)

It is important to note that self-employed individuals have a filing requirement if their net annual earnings from self-employment exceed \$400.

Also, you may qualify as Head of Household if you are married to a non-resident alien. You are considered unmarried for head of household purposes if your spouse was a nonresident at any time during the year and you do not choose to treat your nonresident as a resident. However, your spouse is not a qualifying person for head of household purposes. You must have another qualifying person and meet the other tests to be eligible to file as a head of household.

Foreign currencies need to be converted to US dollar amounts using the published IRS exchange rates

In addition, some individuals may be required to file a tax return or submit other information returns even if they earn less than the minimum income for their filing status. It is also important to note that because retirement benefits are not “foreign earned”, they are not eligible for the Foreign Earned Income Exclusion and, although, these payments are usually taxable only in the country of residence, you are/may be required to file a US tax return to report such income.

Source: IRS Pub 501

Transmission of US Citizenship to Child Born Abroad

FAWCO Citizenship Articles

One topic that consistently comes up in the expat community is acquiring US citizenship for children born abroad to US citizen parents who have not lived in US territory sufficient time for their children to have acquired US citizenship at birth, if the birth took place outside the US.

The legal requirement for a child born outside the US to be a US citizen at birth is that at least one parent is a US citizen who can document a physical presence in the US for at least five (5) years, two of which must be after the age of fourteen (14). The physical presence does not have to be consecutive, but a cumulative total of five years. If you believe that your son or daughter someday may have children born outside of the US, then start documenting the time they spend in US territory as this can have important implications in the future. Passport stamps, flight records, church/school/camp records, doctor/dentist appointments, etc. are examples of such records. Three of the five requisite years can be accumulated prior to his/her fourteenth birthday.

If the adult US citizen does not have the residency requirement, but wants their child/ren to have US citizenship, then the US citizen grandparent can convey citizenship to the child/ren. Section 322 of the Immigration and Naturalization Act (INA) allows for a child to acquire US citizenship through a grandparent, if the parent cannot convey citizenship directly. The grandparent must be a US citizen who meets the physical presence requirement of at least five (5) years, two (2) of which must be after the age of fourteen. The application, Form N-600K, must be submitted to USCIS, along with birth certificates, proof of residency of the petitioning adult and the filing fee. The interview will take place in the US, with the exception of a US military dependent, and the process MUST be completed prior to reaching his/her 18th birthday. Processing times may vary, so while it may only take a few months, it is advisable to submit the application and supporting documents at least a year prior to the child's 18th birthday, or much earlier. Children under the age of 14 will most likely not be required to take the Oath of Allegiance, however, the child will be required to appear for an interview.

The child can apply for a visitor visa once the interview in the US has been scheduled. A certificate of citizenship will be issued and the child will be eligible to apply for a US passport.

The child can apply for a visitor visa once the interview in the US has been scheduled. A certificate of citizenship will be issued and the child will be eligible to apply for a US passport.

US Voting - NOW is the Time to Act

[FAWCO Voting Articles](#)

It's more than time for FAWCO and its clubs and members to strongly encourage overseas Americans to vote in the 2022 US elections. While Election Day is November 8 in the US, it comes a month earlier for overseas voters – who must receive and return absentee ballots by the deadlines set by their states. Overseas voters must start the process even earlier – now, if they haven't already – to ensure that they are registered to vote in time. As noted, [many states have made new rules and requirements](#) that making voting harder.

The US Voting Committee has already offered [advice to individual overseas voters](#). Now we must broaden our focus to include voter-registration activities by and in FAWCO clubs.

What you and your club can do?

1. “Secure your own oxygen mask before attempting to assist others.” (Get yourself registered first).

Be sure that you are registered before trying to help others register. Go to FAWCO's partner, the [US Vote Foundation](#), or the Federal Voting Assistance program ([EVAP](#)), fill out the form online and send it to your local election official, carefully following all the instructions. **In view of delays in the US Postal Service, request that your ballot be delivered electronically (and return your ballot in the same way if your state permits that).** Then check with that official a couple of weeks later to be sure you're on the rolls. (Urge all other voters to do the same when you get to them.) Urge message recipients to pass the message to other Americans.

2. Promote voting in your daily life.

Urge all the other Americans you know to register to vote, and advise and assist them as needed. Urge your friends and acquaintances to do the same. Give voting information in the signature of your email, and voting

graphics and information on your website and social-media accounts (Facebook, Twitter, etc.).

3. Promote voting in your club and local community.

Give information on voting in your club newsletter and at virtual and in-person meetings of your club and its interest groups. Hold dedicated virtual and/or in-person events to inform and register voters. Give voting graphics and information on your club website and social-media accounts (Facebook, Twitter, etc.). Do/Offer the same for any other group you belong to, and any US expat group operating in your vicinity.

Answer voters' questions, if you have the knowledge, or direct them to FAWCO (), or the voter help desks or FAQs of the [US Vote Foundation](#) or [FVAP](#) (Some US embassy/consulate officials can do this, too, but they are operating with reduced capacity at present.)

Resources

For all these tasks, use the regularly updated information and resources provided by FAWCO; get them from:

- the [US Voting](#) section of the FAWCO website, and its monthly [articles](#); and
- FAWCO publications, such as the quarterly [US Liaison Bulletin](#) and the monthly *News in Brief* ([NiB](#)).

We also offer three videos on FAWCO's YouTube channel:

1. [Why the rush to register to vote?](#) (1:34)
2. [Information and support from FAWCO](#) (1:05)
3. [Voter registration: demonstration](#) (5:30)

All three date from 2020, but are still accurate in general terms. Soon we expect the US Vote Foundation and FVAP to offer outreach materials, too.

The above information was supplied by FAWCO Liaison Bulletin, Johanna Dishongh, FAWCO's US Liaison



Did you know that you can now set up an IRS account online?

Until the end of last year, Americans living outside the US were blocked from accessing and setting up an online account on the IRS website. Many people have successfully set up an online account, although others have reported that they struggled to do so.

If you want to set up an online IRS account, here are some resources that you can use:

- [CNET It's tax season](#): Here's how to set up an online IRS account This article explains the steps and documents required to set up your online account. You don't need to set up an online account, but it helps with having visibility of what the IRS has on file for you. It's especially useful for viewing when your economic stimulus payments and child tax credit payments have been sent.
- [ID.me](#): What if I don't live in the United States? You shouldn't need a US address or a US phone number to sign up for an online account; you should be able to use your UK address and UK phone number if that's all you have. If you have any problems setting up your account, read this article and hopefully it'll point you in the right direction to get your account set up.

Thanks to Dale Finlay for this update

Covid 19 News

Scotland Covid19 Links

Introduction to NHS inform.scot

"Test and Protect is Scotland's way of putting into practice the test, trace, isolate, support strategy.

It will prevent the spread of coronavirus in the community by:

- identifying cases of coronavirus through testing
- tracing the people who may have become infected by spending time in close contact with them
- supporting those close contacts to self-isolate, so that if they have the virus they are less likely transmit it to others

Breaking the chains of transmission in the community will stop the virus spreading. This will allow us to gradually change the restrictions that help to suppress the virus."

Testing

"There are test centres across Scotland for people with and without symptoms. You can also get tests to do at home.

You can get a test for:

- yourself
- someone you care for
- a child in your care"

[Get a test if you have symptoms](#)

Get a test if you do not have symptoms

MEMBER PUBLICATIONS

Trees: Planting, Reforestation and Rewilding

by Amanda Drollinger, AWC Central Scotland

(Originally published by FAWCO: <https://www.fawco.org/global-issues/environment/environment-articles/4679-trees-planting-reforestation-and-rewilding>)



I had the privilege of attending COP26 in Glasgow in November 2021. It was an amazing opportunity to hear directly from environmental action groups, environmental innovators, the United Nations, the World Health Organization, national and international organizations, nations and world leaders. They shared their plans, strategies and trajectories for navigating the climate crises and climate change. I learned first and foremost that climate change is not a matter of this OR that solution, it is a matter of this AND that solution. The problems we face are too many and too complex to have a single solution. While we can look at the solutions one at a time, we must always keep in mind the many other “ands” that are also needed. One aspect that was agreed upon and which drew my interest at the conference was forest and tree management and that relationship to human occupation of the earth and our ecosystem/welfare. This is something fundamental to our existence, and we all can take the time to be involved in its creation and protection. Trees: let’s plant them, protect them and enjoy them.

Declaration on Forests and Land Use

At COP26 on November 12, 2021, the Declaration on Forests and Land Use was signed by 141 countries (of the 197 parties in attendance). With the identified countries pledging to “Emphasise the critical and interdependent roles of forests of all types, biodiversity and sustainable land use in enabling the world to meet its sustainable development goals; to help achieve a balance between anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions and removal by sinks; to adapt to climate change; and to maintain other ecosystem services.” The Declaration goes on to commit to “working collectively to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030.” In the six points of the declaration, the first is “Conserve forests and other terrestrial ecosystems and accelerate their restoration.”

Ways of participating individually

- Small scale: Planting trees and plants in your own private garden or yard that create or encourage location-appropriate biodiversity.
- Medium scale: If you live in an urban location or apartment without a private garden area, then city public parks and gardens or shared lands are a great place to plant. These spaces will all need to be planted with the approval of city and local community organizations to ensure longevity and maintenance.
- Large scale: Planting trees and plants with the introduction of indigenous animals

in national parks and/or with land restoration and management charities.



How do we, individually, engage with reforestation and rewilding?

Reforestation and rewilding, whether at the small, medium or large scale, are all location-dependent. Working with the right information sources will yield the best outcomes for the plants and for biodiversity. The location of the trees is critical in identifying and introducing the most appropriate biodiversity. Some examples of good information sources are botanical gardens. The Royal Botanical Garden Edinburgh is my local example, and while they work worldwide and can be a source of information for many countries, there might be a more local option. Royal Botanic Gardens Kew is another resource dedicated to understanding and sharing information on global biodiversity. Kew was at COP26 to promote its global biodiversity information sharing function. These information sources can work well at any scale, whether you are looking to plant a single tree in your own yard or thousands of trees and plants with a land restoration charity.

One way to think about tree planting is through carbon compensation for your flights. How can you compensate?

1. Go to [My Climate.org](https://myclimate.org) to calculate the amount of CO² produced by your flight. There will be an amount given (in tons) that you can use to calculate the number of trees you need to plant in order to compensate. Remember: 1000k = 1 metric ton = 1 tree (If, for some reason you don't want to compensate with tree planting in the FAWCO Grove, a monetary amount to offset your carbon footprint is given on the website along with a number of projects that are also good compensation alternatives.)
2. For the FAWCO Grove with Trees for Life, go to the following link: [FAWCO Grove](#). The cost to plant one tree is £6 / €6.80 / \$7.50. Donate the amount needed for the number of trees needed to compensate for your flight – make sure to round up for a whole number of trees – and your compensation is complete.

A reforestation and rewilding charity



Trees for Life is my local Scottish example of a good reforestation and rewilding charity. There are many others worldwide, and choosing one that you can visit and see the results is fun and a huge reassurance that the money donated is making a difference. Alongside their reforestation work, Trees for Life also advocates and facilitates rewilding. They will be establishing the world's first Rewilding Centre at Dundreggan, with the aim of educating the public about rewilding. Dundreggan is the gateway location to the majority of their tree-planting work, with the existing trails through the woodland they've planted. As part of the Rewilding Europe initiative, Trees for Life will expand their work into Glen Affric in the Scottish Highlands.

“The Affric Highlands will be a pioneering area for selling nature-based carbon at a premium price from the rewilding work carried out. We are exploring the potential to sell accredited carbon with positive outcomes for

communities as well as for nature, and develop so called ‘rewilding credits’ which will directly benefit private landowners and the community. We envisage that carbon capture will become a key feature of the area’s business model, with an increasing amount of carbon stored year-on-year from habitat restoration work.”

Sources:

- *Disappearing Woodland* by Sally Delahooke
 - <https://ukcop26.org/glasgow-leaders-declaration-on-forests-and-land-use/>
 - *Play with Nature illustration* by Tharien van Eck, from the children’s book *What is a Perfect World?*
-

Bridging the Gap – Overcoming Academic Disruptions on the Road to Higher Education (SDG Targets 4.3 & 4.4)

by Lindsay Nygren, AWC of Central Scotland

(Originally published by FAWCO: <https://www.fawco.org/global-issues/education/education-articles/4695-bridging-the-gap-overcoming-academic-disruptions-on-the-road-to-higher-education-sdg-targets-4-3-4-4>)

Two years into the pandemic, the effects of COVID-19 are definitely being felt in higher education as we begin to see the ripple effect of so much disruption in youth education attainment and wider educational disadvantages. In the United Kingdom, Cambridge University has taken a proactive approach to bridging the gap in attainment levels and instilling confidence in students to pursue an education in engineering or physical sciences.

Cambridge is working to bridge the gap of accessibility for students to top universities regardless of their backgrounds (Cambridge University, 2021). The STEM SMART (Subject Mastery and Attainment Raising Tuition) program, which took on its first cohort of 900 students in January 2022, is a 17-month program run by the university and Department of Education as an initiative to include students who live in high deprivation, students who have been unable to access further mathematics, mature students who are self-studying, and those who have received free school meals at any point (BBC, 2021). As many schools and students continue to face challenges and worsened inequalities brought on by the pandemic, it is the hope that this initiative will contribute positively to society by easing the path to higher learning.

It is the expectation that this program will encourage students who had not previously considered attending university to apply for top universities. Even for those who do not intend to apply for top universities, STEM SMART will strive to help them make competitive applications to other universities’ STEM courses. But far beyond the prospect of applying for a place at a university, this scheme offers students and volunteers the chance to make a change.

With the announcement of this initiative, over 300 academics and current students have come forward to mentor the young students and answer their questions about university life. Fellows at Cambridge will mentor students in their last year and a half of high school through weekly online tutorials, marking work and giving individual feedback and live online motivational lectures (Cambridge University, 2021). The young students will also attend a four-day course in Cambridge and work with a Cambridge mentor to live the life of a

Cambridge student and consider applying for a place. This program will complement the classroom learning and provide resources which aren't readily available, with the promise to give every student the best possible chance to attend university (Farrell, 2021).

The program itself offers the attention and extra time that teachers want to give but are unable to due to the already strained system they work within. Demands on high school teachers were already high, but the pandemic has increased these demands to the point that teachers are unable to offer additional support to their students.

This initiative, in addition to the other schemes introduced in 2022 involving arts, humanities and social sciences, seeks to address the skills shortage in the UK while simultaneously providing students with an opportunity to advance their education beyond what they thought was possible. While the pandemic has certainly taken its toll on the education attainment of these young learners, it is hopeful that this initiative will bridge the gap to higher education. Even once we are through the pandemic, it would be a hope that this initiative and others like it continue to reach disadvantaged youth and encourage their application to education at the university level.

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Indigenous Women Working for a Better Tomorrow

By Tara Scott, AWC Central Scotland

Originally published: <https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/e/2PACX->

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"FAWCO UN Rep Tara Scott was a delegate to COP26 in Glasgow in November 2021. Tara was deeply impressed by the many indigenous women who talked about their lives, their communities, and their work protecting the environment. She put together [a presentation](#) with beautiful artwork, photos of several indigenous women, and links to articles, websites and speeches. "

Notes from the Field: How to Be a Global Citizen (SDG Target 4.7)

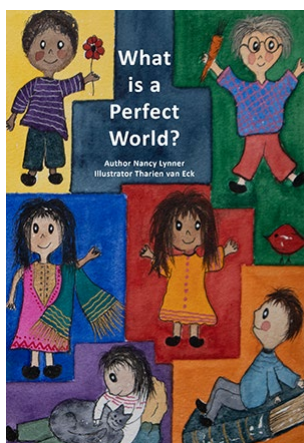
by Nancy Lynner, AWC of Central Scotland

(Originally published by FAWCO: <https://www.fawco.org/global-issues/education/education-articles/4734-notes-from-the-field-how-to-be-a-global-citizen-sdg-target-4-7>)

I began my career as a children's performer, using mime, juggling, puppets and clowning with various theatre companies. I met my husband, who was also a performer, and we created our own shows for families, schools and performing arts venues. We expanded into sourcing other entertainers and events vendors to create multi-faceted special events. My many various jobs have been within the industries including performing arts, events business and centers of education from nursery schools to universities. For the last 40 years I have created dramatic enactments of classic folk and fairy tales in classrooms. I have written children's books for 30 years. I was not successful getting published, but continued to write for children.

During the pandemic of 2020, my daughter-in-law was pregnant with their second child. As I began to ponder the changes wrought by the dilemmas created by COVID-19, the words of *What is a Perfect World?* came to me. I wrote it for my grandchildren. I built the order of the pages to start with clean air, clean water, and good food as being the priorities of what a child needs. At age 0 and age 3, the grandchildren might feel dispirited with the book's list of heavy work ahead. I had to write a soft ending. Ice cream appealed.

Giving the book as only text would not do. I began selecting free online coloring pages to illustrate the book for my grandsons, to increase their interaction with the book. After years of writing stories, acting out dramas, and making puppet shows for children, I had written non-fiction. I sent it to family and friends. Five months later, when I confided to Amanda Drollinger that I wanted to spend more time on children's literacy and literature, and mentioned my book, she introduced me to Tharien van Eck. A talented artist, Tharien had never illustrated a children's book, but she rose to the occasion, and her watercolor and ink characters and settings are incredible. They are whimsical, airy, colorful and full of optimism.



We formed a team to self-publish this book, with all proceeds to go to the FAWCO Target Project in perpetuity. Our team worked together on Zoom once a week, and when we needed a book designer, our fellow American Women's Club of Central Scotland (AWCCS) member and our webmaster, Joyce Halsan, joined the team. We published on August 31, 2021. On January 16, 2022, the AWCCS sponsored an art exhibit of van Eck's original watercolours at The Upright Gallery, 3 Barclay Terrace, Edinburgh. The show was open to the public for a week. In spite of the upsurge of a new variant of the virus, and the dark cold winter date, we were able to earn £500.00 for a donation to the FAWCO Target Project. Stay tuned for future projects related to this wonderful team with whom I have been privileged to work!

Interested in purchasing What is a Perfect World? To order:

Within the UK: GBP15 (plus postage). Contact details for Nancy Lynner are at www.NancyLynner.com

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Special Interest Group Coordinators

Although we will not be meeting in person, some of these groups may be meeting online. Contact us if you would like to participate.

Edinburgh: Dale Finlayson for Morning Book Group, Coffee Plus Edinburgh and Voting Coordinator

Glasgow: Books Beverages and Banter hosted by various individuals.

Fife: Pat Peters for Fife Dinner Club

Join us as a Board Member or work on a Team

Interested in joining us as a board member? We would love to hear from you. We are meeting online at the present, but still very active in the club. We have the following openings:

Communications Convenor is looking for a replacement as she is retiring this June 2022 as well as members who would like to help as a team in the following areas: Newsletter writing on line, Advertising/PR and working on the website. Expertise is helpful, but training is available if you want to learn a system. Please notify Joyce of your interest.

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About Olivia McLaren: A U.S. qualified attorney admitted to the bar of the State of New York, who worked in U.S. immigration and nationality law in New York City for a decade before opening Olivia McLaren, Ltd. in Edinburgh in 2014. Listed in *Who's Who in Corporate Immigration* (2015-2016). Co-columnist for the *New York Law Journal* bimonthly immigration law column between 2012 and 2014. Also selected as a Rising Star by Super Lawyers in NY Metro in 2013 and 2014, as published in *NY Times Magazine*. Graduated with a J.D. and LL.M. in International & Comparative Law from Duke University in 2004.

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Going Home Soon?

FAUSA

Are you returning to the US any time soon? Whether you are being dragged back kicking and screaming or if you can hardly wait to return home, you will probably find that as a “repat” you and your family members are different sorts of Americans from those who stayed behind. This can be a jolt, but there is help out there for you. Membership in the FAWCO Alumnae, USA, better known as FAUSA keeps you in touch with others who understand the life changing experience of living in other cultures.

Besides the pure psychological support of being a part of this network, there are other benefits, too. The Quarterly magazine carries articles of interest to “repats,” and you may apply for the FAUSA Education Award for yourself or a child. In addition, FAUSA members may attend the FAWCO conferences overseas and the FAUSA Annual Meeting, which is in a different part of the US every fall. Learn all about FAUSA, contact someone in your region, and download an application at www.fausa.org. We would love to hear from you.

Jane IndrelandPresident, FAUSA

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*Graves, Katie Graham, **Alana Victor**, and Joyce Halsan. If you wish to contribute to our next Newsletter, please send your article to Joyce Halsan.*

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