

# MHEAC SPRING NEWSLETTER

## Connecting Alumnae Across Europe

### Welcome Message

## A Word from the European Council Chair

Dear all,

Some anniversaries are not worth celebrating. There is no need to remind each other that exactly one year ago we were learning how to cope with lockdowns and masks, postponing travel plans, and mastering the skills of working from home and distance learning.



Let us celebrate good things instead: 12 months of resilience, sharing, and true MHC friendship within our group!

So many good things have happened since our latest newsletter. Scores of alums have **virtually gathered** all over the continent to share hope, solace, and even cooking tips. Corinne Morgan '13 and the many and loyal friends of the **virtual M&Cs** on Sunday evening have recently blown out a first birthday candle, inspiring similar initiatives all over the world.

The two **literary aperitifs** held since last November have offered food for our souls and gathered alums of all ages, joined by the common desire to learn more about ourselves and our sometimes unsuspected creative skills. Over 350 kitchens worldwide now boast a copy of our bestselling first cookbook **Uncommon Kitchens**. A new, glamorous, and even more cosmopolitan festive edition will hit the shelves in the next few weeks.

There are even more things to celebrate. While the world is focusing on the pandemic, extraordinary alumna Ioli Christopoulou '01 dedicates her life and energies to the preservation of our environment, focusing on developing and promoting policy solutions for a **green and sustainable future**. The Club of Britain makes it possible for international students to receive financial support thanks to an **amazing donation** to Mount Holyoke, which will support the International Student Scholarship Aid.

We rocked again, and we will continue to do so.

So, while with pain in my heart I must share the news that the Alumnae Council has recently decided to **postpone the 16<sup>th</sup> European Alumnae Symposium** until the fall

of 2022 and instead plans to hold a short virtual gathering this year, I am delighted to announce our next alumnae initiative – a spring/summer **photography competition!** Pull out your cameras and polish your lenses: more information will follow soon!

Thank you for your support and participation and happy reading!

**Silvia Maulini '80**

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## Update on the 16th European Alumnae Symposium

In view of the continuing complexity of the current health situation, the European Alumnae Council recently decided to postpone the next Symposium to the fall of 2022. An update on the planning will be available after the summer.

**Stay safe and healthy: we look forward to seeing you in 2022!!**

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## Upcoming photo competition!

**Pull out your cameras, polish your lenses, and get ready to join our new amazing contest!**

Uncommon Cameras, a **photography competition open to all international**

**alums**, is about to start! This unique initiative, run by MHEAC and the Mount Holyoke Global Alumnae Alliance, will allow all of us to **share our best pictures, connect with each other, and win special prizes**. An international jury of distinguished specialists in the field of photography, all Mount Holyoke siblings, will evaluate the submissions and select winners in different categories, but the final super winner will be chosen by all of us! All photographs will be displayed on our website and on Instagram, and the winning photos will be used in future MHEAC communications projects.

The competition will be launched in the next few weeks, so keep an eye on your inbox and our Facebook group page and get ready to celebrate our creativity, diversity and imagination!

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## On Environmentalism & Sustainability

# Alumna Spotlight: Ioli Christopoulou '01

*A proud Mount Holyoke alumna, class of 2001, with a strong passion for environmental protection!*

### Ioli Christopoulou '01

#### Can you tell us a few words about yourself?

A proud Mount Holyoke alumna, class of 2001, with a strong passion for environmental protection! This passion led to the co-founding of [The Green Tank](#), **Greece's first environmental think tank**, which is my main and most exciting endeavour currently!

#### What inspired you to become an environmentalist?

To be honest, I am not exactly sure. I guess I was influenced by my family and my school, since I was about 13 years old or so when I started saying that I would become an environmental lawyer. This is not exactly the path I followed, but at Mount Holyoke I wrote my thesis with late Professor Walter Stewart on international environmental law!

#### How did you break into your field?

It made a difference that I knew what I wanted to do. My compass throughout my career has been **"to change the world, to make it more sustainable... it's up to us"**. It is this determination that change is possible that has guided me every step of the way.

#### Do you have a particular role model that pushed you/inspired you/or challenged you to conquer your fears?

I was lucky to have had many inspirational figures in my life, including **many strong women**. They have offered a variety of lessons, insights, advice, examples. Some still do! Over time, these have created a beautiful, rich, resourceful basket of knowledge and inspiration from which I often draw.

### **What's one challenge you faced over the course of the years and how did you manage to overcome it?**

**The moment that I was faced with injustice** from a system that I had trusted stands out. The absence of accountability when that happened was an even more painful shock to me. So, to overcome the challenge, I chose to remain true to my values - they were non-negotiable.

Indeed, as the saying goes, every cloud has a silver lining. That moment became a trigger for change and a step forward, a step for which I feel very happy and proud.

### **Did you have a vision of your career when you were at Mount Holyoke? How did that vision change over the years?**

Yes, it was **clear from the beginning** that my career would be in environmental policy. And it pretty much remains the same!

### **What is your most fond memory of your time back at Mount Holyoke?**

There are many fond memories. I **remember fondly** several of my classes, the hours spent with friends... in the library stacks. Then my mind switches to the hours sorting mail with at the school's post-office and the long chats in the dining halls. Other memories, are from other on-campus activities, mostly to how a group of us persuaded the school to switch to fair trade coffee as well as our late Sunday preparations for the Model United Nations competitions.

### **How did your Mount Holyoke experience contribute to your career aspirations?**

When I went back to campus in the fall of 2019, I realized, perhaps, more clearly than ever before, that **Mount Holyoke gave me a very solid foundation on which to build my future**. The experience – in and out of class – fortified me with the assurance that an impactful career is possible.

### **What advice would you give to young women today who want to break into this field?**

**My advice would be to remain optimistic**. While trends on the state of the environment are more than alarming, we can still reverse them and in fact, I think, that change is already happening.

### **What according to you is the biggest environmental threat today?**

The interlinked climate and biodiversity crises, which, if not reversed, will **change our precious planet Earth** forever.

### **If there's one thing that everyone could do today to help protect the environment, what would that be?**

I don't like to dictate what one must do, as it depends on one's circumstances. One can reduce, reuse and recycle more, another can use the bike, someone else can switch to a vegetarian diet or plant a tree. **So I would rather say do what you can; and, if you are in a position to do more, then do so!**

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## British Club Donation to International Student Scholarship Aid

The donation for international student scholarship resumes a tradition which began in 1987. The first award, originally devised to celebrate Mount Holyoke's 1987 sesquicentennial, enabled a British student, selected by the college, to study in South Hadley for one year. Subsequently, the club continued to build funds from the sale of Halcyon Days enamel boxes, place mats and coasters.

The enamel boxes, which showed different designs of the college, celebrate the history of MHC. Once income reached a threshold of \$5,000, the club sent funds to the college. As of 2013 we had sent eleven scholarships of \$5,000.

The 2021 award is made possible through the generosity of alumnae donations, including one from the Lyndsey Ingram Gallery, and funds raised from events and the 2020 AGM online silent auction.

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## Uncommon Kitchens Goes Global!

### ***Uncommon Kitchens Goes Global!***

Our cookbook ***Uncommon Kitchens*** has sold over 350 copies worldwide since its 2020 publication! Building on this success, in December the MHEAC launched a new initiative to create a second recipe collection, this time dedicated to **festive recipes from all over the world**. Response from fellow alums and students world-wide was enthusiastic. The editorial team received 42 recipes belonging to different seasonal and festive traditions cherished within our community.

The recipes include traditional family dishes and extravagant culinary adventures from several European countries and the United States as well as India, Hong Kong, South Korea, Lebanon, among others. The recipes are supported by fascinating personal backstories, which allow us to celebrate our international network in a truly unique way. You can access ***Uncommon Kitchens Festive Edition*** online [here](#).

E-versions of the cookbook as well as a paper version will be available soon. In the meantime, if you have not done so yet, remember to purchase a copy of ***Uncommon Kitchens***, which is available via Amazon.com (US delivery) and in Europe via the Amazon stores in France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and the United Kingdom. The book is attractively priced, and it makes a great present for family and friends.

**The feedback received by our readers speaks volumes:**

"The backstories are wonderful - worth the price for the stories alone - regardless if you even get around to cooking anything!" (Laurie '85 - US)

"I received my copy today and I am overjoyed. I feel re-connected with Mohome and friends from everywhere." (Eliza, '18 - Germany)

"I just want to say thank you to the EU Council for this wonderful project. Food is such a community building activity and we needed that ever so much this year" (Marcia '67 - US)

**Proceeds from the sales of the book will support our MHEAC "Graduating Senior Award" fund.**

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## Wrap Up of Literary Aperitifs

Virtual Literary Aperitifs – feeding our minds and souls

### Virtual Literary Aperitifs – feeding our minds and souls.

In the latest dark winter period, two virtual literary aperitifs offered alums and students from Europe and beyond a much-needed dose of intellectual stimulation and discussion.

On November 21, French alumna **Patricia Brooks '89**, a Certified Professional Coach, book author and host of the [Discovering Courage Podcast](#), shared her personal story of growth and empowerment with us, offering hope and inspiration to all attendees.

Patricia illustrated how her "Three Catalysts for Cultivating Courage" help women believe in their dreams, build confidence in their abilities, and develop actionable plans to achieve what they once thought impossible and thus feel empowered to tackle their next feat.

Her message was music to all attendees' ears, and the breakout sessions allowed everyone to explore how the tools that help us navigate uncertainty and change can allow us to turn obstacles into opportunities.

On February 20 distinguished poets **Randi Stebbins '95**, Director of the Center for Writing at the University of Iceland, and **Marjory Wentworth '80**, Professor of Literature at the College of Charleston (South Carolina), challenged and engaged us in a unique interactive session focusing on "found poetry". The literary equivalent of a collage, found poetry refashions existing texts, reordering, and presenting the contents as poems. Poems included in this genre are often made from newspaper articles, street signs, graffiti, speeches, letters, or even other poems.

The theme of the session led by Randi and Marjory was "social (in)justice in current events". Following a brief introduction to found poetry, text mapping, and text erasure techniques, all participants were able to focus on creating their own poems, which were subsequently enthusiastically shared with the rest of the attendees.

If you missed one of these fascinating sessions, you can access the recordings at:

<https://new.alumnae.mtholyoke.edu/europe/our-events/literary-apertifs/>

Happy viewing!

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## Happy Birthday, Virtual M&Cs!

In late March 2020, when most European countries started to embrace more and more social distancing measures, Corinne Morgan '13, President of the Mount Holyoke Club of Britain, thought it would be nice to set up a weekly virtual Milk and Cookies to help stay connected to one another and share thoughts and experiences in these difficult times.

The sessions, originally promoted to the British Club, were soon advertised to all members of the European Alumnae Community.

If you would like to take the opportunity to connect with other MHC alumnae, please feel free to join every Sunday evening at 8:00 PM (CET) 7:00 (GMT) at

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/685524164>



The link to the sessions is also pinned in our [Mount Holyoke European Alumnae Facebook](#) group page each Sunday morning, together with a yummy cookie recipe, courtesy of Corinne.

**The Virtual Milk und Cookies just celebrated its 1st birthday!**

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## Upcoming Events

### Germany

**Online Get-Together** for Saxony and Hamburg

**Date:** late June, exact date tbd

Stay tuned!

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### Great Britain

**Spring Event** - Laurel Lunch – an event arranged to coincide with virtual graduation and to give alums an opportunity to talk to graduating students who may be interested in coming to the UK or to Europe.

**Summer Event** - themed: women in men's fields or other panel type event

Anticipating a change to travel once more, the club is planning in-person gatherings around the country, with plans for events in Bath, Bristol, Cardiff, Edinburgh, and even plans to link up with alums in Europe, once it is safe to do so.

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### The Netherlands

**16.05.2021 - Cooking with Micha and Silvia** with new and exciting recipes!



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## Past Events

### Resilient Networks & Bonds

## Germany

### Germany is going digital!

Germany is going digital! On 4th March the Mount Holyoke **Regional Group "Duesseldorf-Cologne"** met for its first **online social event**. Under the motto of "Chase The Winter Blues Away!" the Head of the Duesseldorf-Cologne Alumnae Regional Group, Vanieta Canonico-Jahn '77, organized a fun Zoom evening. After a brief discussion about the Symposium and College news presented by Gergana Karadzhova '12, the participants opened up for an informal discussion. A second online event took place on 14th April. The Head of the **Regional Group "Munich - Bavaria"**, Nancy Kuehler'65 invited members of the regional group to hang out together and connect. More than 10 alums were able to join, some of them connecting for the first time to the local group, others - reconnecting with dear friends. On behalf of the organizers, thanks to everyone who was able to attend these events and hope to see even more of you next time!

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## Great Britain

The Club wound up 2020 with an innovative Zoom AGM in November. The meeting continued the literary theme, now familiar from previous lunches and aperitifs, by featuring authors Liz Fenwick '85 and Deborah Harkness '86. The two authors talked about their writing partnership, a collaboration which gives them feedback and an objective perspective on their works in progress.

### Liz Fenwick

The inspiration for Liz's latest book *The Path to the Sea* is a notebook, chock full of recipes for 60s and 70s dinner parties, which she inherited. Exploring tales of the dinner parties led to the question, "what if a child saw something he didn't understand, but it altered his life?" Similarly, Deborah's *All Souls Trilogy*, began with a question, "if there really are witches and vampires, what do they do for a living?" The

answer has led not just to a book trio, but also to a television fantasy series, *A Discovery of Witches*.

## Deborah Harkness

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The AGM launched the **club's first online silent auction**, which raised over £800 and allowed the club to make a **£5,000 donation to Mount Holyoke**. AGM attendees voted to donate the funds to International Student Scholarship Aid. Read more about it in "**British Club Donation to International Student Scholarship Aid**" in this newsletter.

Virtual events continue in 2021, with Sunday night M&Cs, shared among the European community and beyond. On February 28<sup>th</sup> we held a Mary Lyon's Birthday Party, celebrating our founder's birthday with cake, cookies, ice cream.

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## Greece

On the occasion of **International Women's Day (March 8)**, the Greece & Cyprus group met for a virtual get-together. It was very exciting to welcome two new alumnae to our group and to host Silvia Maulini (MHEAC Chair) as our special guest! We had a very engaging discussion on various topics, ranging from coping with the pandemic, mental health, and well-being to the #metoo movement here in Greece.

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## The Netherlands

### Cooking with Micha and Silvia

Since November 2020 alums in the Netherlands have been gathering regularly for virtual culinary workshops led by Micha Heilman '19 and Silvia Maulini '80. The workshops have included, among others, a vegetarian session, a risotto masterclass, and, more recently, a pre-Easter brunch with guest chef Suzanne Jansen '91. Participants have the opportunity to cook alongside the "chefs", learning tips for finessing their skills, or simply to watch and get inspired for future culinary adventures. The recipes and the list of ingredients needed for each workshop are shared prior to the session.

Micha, known by now as the “chef on wheels”, often cooks on her boyfriend's van, producing mouthwatering dishes in spite of the somehow limited space and cooking equipment. More sessions will follow in the next few months, to include cooking as well as plenty of talking and sharing.

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## Sweden

The Sweden group was active with many virtual events in the past year, allowing Alumni to remain connected.

25 Sept. 2020.

Meet & Greet - Virtual Afterwork

18 Oct. 2020

Mountain Day Memories...Virtual Chat

15 Nov. 2020

Sunday Morning Coffee - Bring a Book to recommend

13 Dec. 2020

Glögg julmingel ... share a special ornament

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## Looking for a group near you?

Get to know the European Council  
Country Delegates

[Click Here for Contact Details](#)

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